

Finals read in full on
Aug 17th 1999

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'M' followed by a horizontal line and a small loop.

MIKE HAND.

RUTH HAND

A biography

by

JOHN HAND

Forward

The decision to write Ruth Hand's story was made one afternoon in mid-1987. During a visit by the writer she began talking of events in the past. As she spoke, reminiscing, he was for once not being dull. Instead of looking at his watch and waiting for an opportunity to say he must go, he really listened, with pleasure and pertinent observations.

It occurred to him, in that rare perceptive mood, that all those little stories he had been hearing over a good number of years were something far more precious than gossip to pass away the time. In all those apparently random anecdotes he was hearing a story, the single story of an interesting, full, diversified and satisfying life.

The diversity stems partly from the circumstances into which fortune placed her and partly from within herself: her experiences; her responses to those experiences; quests for new horizons. In the privilege and ease of the upper-middle class English life into which Ruth was born, she was unable to find satisfaction. She became instead a farmer's wife in Tasmania, with a large family, a mortgage and much hard work. She went as her heart directed her and was happy.

Ruth has lived in both England and Australia, and has travelled to other parts of the world. She is a scholarly person with an honours degree and a continuing passion to learn. She reads a great deal. She is an artist who paints in dramatic and perceptive style. In it all she is a person obsessed with all the marvels of the world in which she lives; one who looks both closely and far in order to expand her knowledge and experience, seeing, sensing and feeling with a keenness and intensity that sometimes goes beyond normal human experience.

Despite her considerable intellect she is person who trusts her instincts, who moves as she feels to be right. She married for love and her marriage was a success. She became the mother of nine, and despite all the hard work and worry so many children can give, she knows that that too was right. Right for her, a warm and maternal person with a great capacity to love.

She is a strong person. The physical strength needed in so strenuous a life has faded with age, but she has the moral strength, the dignity and judgement, that befits her position at the head of a large family. Her wishes are respected as they were when her children were young.

Almost the entire story is the product of her own memory, a collation of anecdotes, observations and bare facts put on tape and presented to the writer to be knocked into some sort of shape.

With such a diversity people, incident and situation, the task has sometimes been awkward, but the basic structure falls easily into shape. It is written in three parts, each embracing a distinct phase of Ruth's life. The first is about her childhood and youth, and the dominating influence of her parents. The second is about her life with her husband, as part of a team raising a family, running a farm and sharing in community work. The third is about her later life where she finds independence and is able to pursue her intellectual interests fully and vigorously.

Remarkably different though each phase is from the others, the unity within the story - of the life that it is about - is powerful. There are no unexplained, inexplicable, changes of character, nor any stage where she has been forced to cut her losses after making a mess of things, and start again. Influences in her earlier life constantly re-emerge. Always true to herself, she has been quick to see if her life has been heading in a wrong direction and has unfailingly obeyed her instincts in putting the matter straight. As with all people, there must be isolated, unhappy incidents she would prefer to forget but every significant part of her life is a treasured memory.

It is her wish that her story should appear as the work of the writer rather than as an autobiography. Accordingly it is written in third person, but this is not to suggest that the writer has been able to take liberties. Unless convincing arguments could be given for the exclusion of any of the material given to him, it appears in the manuscript. She would not have taped it if she had not felt it to be important. It is written sometimes with a leaning towards her own mode of expression but generally in the writer's style, and with that she has not interfered so long as the final product does justice to her story.

It presents no real problems that the writer happens to be her second son. For the purposes of such a task his role changes; he stops being her son and becomes her biographer. Had he adopted the role of a son writing about his mother, the essence of the story would have been quite

different. It would not have been her story but his, as he relates to his mother; an exercise in subjectivity for which neither would have much taste.

PART ONE

CHILDHOOD

Chapter 1

Life Begins

Ruth Hodgson was born in Wakefield, Yorkshire, on August 24, 1906. Her parents were a handsome pair. Her mother Emily, was a slender, pretty woman, then in her early twenties. Her father, Stanley, six years older than his wife, was tall, handsome and athletic. Hers was a pleasant, cheerful nature. He was a genial young gentleman.

To all appearances, however, they had little else in common. There was a mutual love of cycling and taking long walks on the Yorkshire moors, but those diversions seemed barely enough to compensate the differences between them, differences not only in background but in the kind of life each wanted to live. Nevertheless, they remained together, a devoted couple for nearly fifty years.

They were not well off in the early years of their marriage. Stanley belonged to a wealthy family but he had left the family business and was receiving only a modest allowance while he awaited his inheritance from his late father's estate. He supplemented his income by playing cricket as a professional in the county of Lincolnshire.

It was a difficult time, moreover, because Stanley, according to the standards of the time, had married beneath him. Emily, had a broad Yorkshire accent, reflecting the kind of school she had attended, and for that she was looked down upon by his family.

This made Emily resentful, and it took little to stir that resentment. Always particular about her appearance, she was inclined, whenever she had been travelling in a train, to ask if she had a smut on her nose. One of Stanley's nephews, Christopher, then about eleven, nick-named her Auntie Smut. She never forgave him. Nor did she forgive most of the others for their attitude towards her.

It was a consolation, later in her marriage, that she became great friends with Stanley's mother, Anne. The two, the somewhat over-blunt daughter-in-law and the rather difficult Victorian mother-in-law, would sit together and have long conversations. Each had solid North English

values that gave them much in common, and there is little doubt that Anne Hodgson was grateful for the way Emily cared for her son.

While Ruth was still a baby the family came out to Tasmania where Stanley had spent some time before he was married. Emily hated it so much that they stayed only six months. It was on the ship returning to England that Ruth learned to walk. She cried bitterly when they got to England because the land *would* stay still and she couldn't keep her balance. She had to learn to walk all over again.

It was some time before they were able to find themselves a real home. They stayed in one place and another, including a boarding house where the landlady brought Ruth half an egg! They didn't stay there long.

In 1908, they moved to Tenby, in southern Wales, sometimes called the little England beyond Wales. Ruth remembers little about it, but when she went back there with her parents to see it in the late twenties, much of it seemed familiar, particularly the little stone fishermen's houses colour-washed in soft yellows, pinks and white, making the quayside lovely. To add to the scene there were always lots of fishing boats out in the bay.

Another faint recollection was a monastery. The monks, probably Cistercians, wore brown robes and were silent! It amazed Ruth, who was a chatterbox, to see them work in field or garden in silence.

They had a bulldog called Billy. He was a real bulldog, not one of these poor creatures that have trouble breathing. He was a dog of strong attitudes, what was more. He couldn't abide postmen and he couldn't bear anybody to touch Ruth. He wouldn't even let Stanley smack her. If she had to be disciplined, she first had to be taken well away from the dog.

It revolts Ruth to recall that she was found one day in the garden sharing a bone with Billy, lick and lick about. She consoles herself with the thought that he was healthy dog and there would not have been the problem of hydatids which was prevalent among Australian farm dogs for many years.

Billy died bravely, as he had lived. When the Hodgsons left Tenby, they gave him to a family with children whom he would escort to school. One day he took exception to a passing car, a rare and noisy phenomenon which he considered a threat to his charges. He caught it by the rear tyre and was flung to his death!

Ruth's first clear recollections of life began at the next place they lived, a house called Sunnybank, near Kendal in the lake district of Westmorland. They went there in 1911.

Chapter 2

Emily

In order to understand the strength of Emily's feeling, one must know something of her childhood. Beneath her natural kindliness and pleasant manner was bitterness born of deprivation. She was born in 1882, a time when it was a disgrace to be poor. The struggle to maintain appearances, the shame of covert charity and endlessly having to go without all but the barest necessities, cut deeply and left a wound which was never to heal.

Emily was the daughter of Samuel and Sarah Sugden. The Sugdens had once been Yorkshire farmers. In the Howden church, in Yorkshire, records of the family go back for eight hundred years. They once owned a place called Drax Manor, in Yorkshire, not far from Hull. It was a small manor holding with one or two tenant farms. In keeping with many farms of that kind, it was badly run; plenty of huntin', shootin' and fishin', and entertaining friends, not much sound economics.

Changes brought about by the industrial revolution saw many such people go to the wall. A few of the bigger ones were able to survive, but many of them had to turn their houses into public museums and the like. Some of the shrewder ones, like the Hodgsons, branched out into trade.

The Sugdens suffered badly, and of the whole family, Emily's parents were among the poorest. Her father hadn't much idea how to make money. He had a low paid job as a health inspector in the local municipality. Relations in Howden were better off, and would inflict upon them such humiliations as dropping cast-off pieces of furniture over their garden wall at night: charity to poor relations!

There were three girls in the family, Louie, Nellie and Emily. Throughout their childhood, until they were old enough to go out and work, they were constantly oppressed by their poverty. There was little to go into their stockings at Christmas. One Christmas all Emily got was one little apple! When their school dresses were washed, they had to stay

in bed until they dried. They had nothing else to wear in which they could be seen.

Their mother, an embittered, complaining woman, would sometimes chide Emily for not making enough effort to learn to cook. She would have a husband to cook for one day, her mother once reminded her. "I'll marry a man who can afford me a cook," Emily retorted. "You will if you're lucky!" her mother replied.

The girls' education was limited but practical. They had special writing and bookkeeping lessons to suit them for jobs in offices. Emily was good at figures and she wrote in concise, logical style with a clear, flowing hand, priding herself on her grammar and spelling.

As soon as they were old enough, the girls went to work, taking the best opportunities that came their way. All three became receptionists at Harrogate hotels. Louie was head receptionist at the Grand Hotel, Harrogate, for many years. Nellie worked in another big hotel and Emily in a smaller one. She was employed there when she met Stanley.

Ruth recalls her Aunt Louie telling her that when she was head receptionist at the Grand Hotel wealthy people would come to drink the waters from nearby springs that were discovered in the 16th century. On one occasion, a wealthy woman's pikenese took ill, and a special train was arranged to bring its vet from London. Little wonder there was class strife!

Stanley, at that time, was helping his brother manage Nocton, his family's Lincolnshire estate. While she had grown up in poverty, he had enjoyed the privileges of wealth. Her education had been meagre and she spoke with a broad Yorkshire accent. His speech had been honed and polished through generations of careful upbringing and good education.

It might be argued that Emily knew where her interests lay; that she married him and stayed with him for his money, but anybody who believes that did not know her very well. Emily certainly was obsessed on matters of money, but that is not enough to explain her constant devotion and respect over so many years.

Two things are certain: they loved each other and both were stoics. Despite all their differences their affection endured and they made their marriage work.

The quality of Emily's character was demonstrated early. Once, when she was pregnant, she went with Stanley to climb Flamborough Head on the Yorkshire coast. It appeared to be a safe enough climb, but Emily

slipped on some loose rock. Stanley held her by one wrist while she struggled to get a footing. Believing the worst, she cried, "Let me go Stannums! You get to the top." Stanley was a good climber and not the sort of man to let go. They got to the top and all was well.

It was a terrifying experience for Emily - she had genuinely believed she was going to die - but no worse than another incident at about that time. They went in a small boat into a cave that could only be entered at low tide. Stanley spent so much time looking about that the boatman had to plead that it was time to go. They had about two more waves, he told them. After that they had no chance of getting out.

Ruth wonders half seriously whether those two incidents, both so frightening for her mother, have anything to do with the fact that she, then the unborn child, has always been claustrophobic and terrified of heights.

Chapter 3

The Cravens

Joseph Stanley Craven Hodgson, sometimes known as Joseph, more commonly as Stanley, was born in Skipton, Yorkshire, in 1876, the third son of John and Anne Hodgson.

Anne was the daughter of a successful industrialist, Joseph Craven. The Cravens are a very old family; of the oldest stock in England. They belonged to the Yorkshire dales in an area known as the Craven district. In the Doomesday Book records may be found of what there was in *Crave* (the Craven area).

The story of Dick Wittington was true of many men of that type, in that time. It commonly happened that young men would break away from home, go up to London and become distinguished. A Craven, William Craven born in a village called Appletreewick, Yorkshire, in 1548, did just that. He went to London, became apprenticed and did extremely well in business. He was the Lord Mayor of London for 1610-11 and was knighted. One of his two sons, William, Earl Of Craven, became military adviser to Charles II. The other, John, later Baron Craven of Ryton, Shropshire, became the founder of the Craven scholarships at Oxford and Cambridge. A later member of the family, in the eighteenth century, was a professor of Arabic.

The Craven motto was *Virtus in Actione Consistit*, (Virtue consists in action). Virtue in that sense meant excellence in mind and body.

When Anne was quite old, living at Park House, her home in Bradford, she told her son Stanley and other members of the family something about their family connections. Stanley was extremely cheery about what he was told but he would not talk about it to others. It is surmised that it had something to do with the fact that they were of the same stock as the Earls of Craven, not descendents, but a branch of the same family.

Stanley was silent because it wasn't done to talk about about ones important relations. They could be pleased about it and talk about it

among themselves, but not to others, and that might well include their own children.

Joseph Craven, Ruth's great grandfather, was not only successful in business. He was a member of the House of Commons and a Chairman of Committees in Gladstone's last government. At Colebrookdale, the farm in Tasmania where Ruth lived for many years, there is a picture of the old man in ceremonial dress, sword at his side and all!

He was a man of strong constitution who lived to a great age. Stanley had been heard to say that he was still a good shot with a gun when in his nineties.

He liked Emily and was very fond of Ruth. He was annoyed that she hadn't been called Ruth Craven Hodgson. Wasn't his name good enough for her, he wanted to know! Ruth, then a small child, liked him very much and the two were close. As he sat in his armchair in front of the fire she would sit on the floor at his knees and he would stroke her hair.

He once sent Ruth to get some grapes from his garden. The gardener was a curmudgeon and probably profiting out of his employer's grapes. He refused to let her have some. A second request was made, this time a command. Ruth got her grapes. The gardener was too frightened of that old man confined to his chair to refuse.

Joseph Craven was well into his nineties when he died. Ruth, then eight or nine, attended his funeral wearing, according to the fashion of time, a black, pork-pie bonnet edged with brown fur.

The communion between them, her love of an old man whom she rarely saw, is still important to Ruth. Now, late in life, she feels closer to him than to any of her uncles and aunts.

Like their father, Joseph's five daughters were all long-lived. Anne died at the age of ninety two. Ruth (Lady Priestly) and Alice (Lady Jones) were both ninety eight. Pattie (Mrs Gregory) was eighty eight. Nellie, christened Sarah Ellen, (Mrs Bottomley), perhaps a little more fond of good living than her sisters, was only seventy eight when she died!

They were stately and formidable women, each imbued with a strong sense of duty. Every morning all five communicated with each other despite the fact that one of them lived in London and that for much of her later life Anne could not get up to go to the phone. White, the parlourmaid, would take the calls.

"Lady Jones's compliments, Ma'am. She hopes you're very well, and she's keeping well, thank you."

A suitable message would be returned.

Ruth has a photograph of them, all elderly and stately, dressed in their stiff brocade, down to their ankles, to say nothing of petticoats and corsets underneath. With her own preference for a thin cotton dress on warm days, Ruth wonders how she would have coped in that Victorian attire. Of the five, all but one was wearing something dark. The exception was Lady Priestly. In spite of a difficult husband, she was always cheerful and, for her age, lively.

It is said that Anne embroidered every scrap of linen that was ever used in the house. She embroidered beautifully and that was how she filled her time. She was somewhat apologetic that she had never washed a saucepan nor scrubbed a floor in her life.

She told Ruth, who was on a visit to England in 1929, how she envied the young women of the time being able to go to college. She had gone to school until she was eighteen and had left to get married to a man of her parents' choice; a matter of business convenience!

She was, nevertheless, a good and faithful wife, with the utmost sense of duty and loyalty towards her husband and family. As she grew old she sat at the centre of the family web, keeping all members aware of what was happening to each other, holding them together. Today, Ruth tries to do the same, holding her own large family together.

Chapter 4

The Hodgsons

The Hodgsons had been farmers, yeoman farmers owning their own land, and later became brewers. Stanley's grandfather, George Hodgson, did not approve of brewing. Like many people in the north of England in the nineteenth century, he and his wife were devout Methodists and thought that brewing was ungodly. They turned away from the assured comfort, wealth and social standing of the brewing life and started out on their own.

They both worked extremely hard as he built up his business. He became a dealer in metal, and his interests expanded. He ultimately established one of the biggest foundries in Yorkshire. He had a big contract for rolling stock in the new South American railways, an involvement that fascinated Stanley, resulting in his becoming thoroughly well versed in South American geography.

Stanley often used to talk about how he loved to go to his grandfather's works and talk to his old foreman. That old man taught him the original Yorkshire dialect. Some years later, while travelling by train across Belgium, Stanley was having trouble talking to the guard who was a German who spoke *Platt Deutsch*. Noticing a similarity between the man's speech and that taught to him by the old foreman, Stanley tried it on him. The guard understood and they were able to hold a conversation. The link between the two would have dated back to the ancient Celts.

Some of the words he learned were *gate* which meant street, *kirk* (church), *kirkgate* (Church street), *ligabed* (lie-abed), *redd* (to put in order - "I'll *redd* up the hearth"). Some of those words filtered through to Australia; *kirk*, of course, is quite well known. One less common that Ruth was fascinated to hear was *yelluming* which meant making bundles of straw suitable for thatching a haystack. The term was used by a farm

labourer, Jack Keating, who lived on Colebrookdale, and must have been passed down through generations of farming ancestors.

In late 1889, George took up residence at Nocton, a magnificent estate about seven miles south east of Lincoln, which he purchased from the Marquis of Ripon. A short while after, in 1890, his son John also went to live in Nocton Hall.

Like his father, John Hodgson was a fine businessman; a loom maker, whose looms it was said were so advanced that for a textile manufacturer to instal any other at that time was to invite ruin.

The tenants of Nocton were dubious when they got word of the intended purchase, but their doubt soon turned to joy. To their delight George ran Nocton in the same businesslike way that he had managed all of his affairs.

One day, while looking into conditions in the village, he was asked by an elderly lady if he would go into her cottage and inspect the floors. This he did, and found the floors in poor condition. He was a very big man, and when he went upstairs he fell through into the kitchen! The outcome was the general renovation of the cottages on the estate, but this, in itself, presented problems. The function of such devices as flush toilets was not readily understood, and it had to be explained to those well-meaning people that vegetable peelings should not be put down the new W. C!

To the south of Nocton was property belonging to the Duke of Devonshire. The old duke was so impressed by George Hodgson's achievements that he said he would have to look into doing similar for his own tenants. He was a good landlord in his own way but such standards of estate management had never occurred to him until he was set the example by a businessman.

The duke was a cordial neighbour who unfailingly forgave Stanley and his brothers whenever his head gamekeeper caught them 'tickling' his trout, but not all noblemen were of such amiable disposition. On one occasion Stanley's father received a telegram from the Archbishop of York: 'Arriving 2.30 train. Ebor.' (*Eboracum* was the Roman name for York). Apparently it was the custom that when His Grace sent a telegram to say he was arriving he had to be put up and given full V. I. P. treatment.

This time he was mistaken. John Hodgson was not going to trodden upon and impoverished by arrogant clergy. He sent a telegram back

informing His Grace that he was not used to getting such demands and he would not be welcome.

The Marquis of Ripon, by contrast had played his part well in society, and always entertained the archbishop. He had even entertained the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, at great expense. John Hodgson was too good a businessman to indulge in such extravagance. He would not put social life ahead of his duty as a landlord, and his money went into the upkeep of the buildings on his estate.

At the time of John Hodgson's death, in 1902, staff at Nocton Hall would have included: the butler; a housekeeper who supervised, never doing housework herself, and was the intermediary between staff and mistress; a cook; a kitchen maid who was cook's understudy; a scullery maid who did the washing up; a pantry maid; a footman; the boot boy who cleaned the boots and shoes of all members of the family and guests; first and second housemaids; a house-parlourmaid; a tweeny who helped sometimes in the kitchen and sometimes in the house; a coachman; a groom or two; a stableboy; a head gardener; under gardeners; a woodsman.

The Nocton estate, consisted of the home farm and about six tenant farms, all on very rich soil, particularly on the fens. It was intensive farming, high yielding in grain crops and fat stock. The fens were low, flat lands that had to be constantly drained. They had dykes running through them, with pumps going all the time to keep the water out. The earliest tractors could not be used on that land. It was tried but they simply sank into the ground.

Nocton Hall had its own 'halt', a little station with platform and all. Stanley could remember such things as a trainload of damaged raisins being brought there to feed the pheasants, and once a trainload of timber from a bankrupt concern being brought there for maintenance of farm buildings.

Farming methods when Stanley was there were traditional but effective. In the winter, cattle were put in shippons, or crew yards, which were buildings something like Dutch barns, but with removable sides, where they sheltered from snow and other rigours of the weather. By the end of the winter the cattle would be standing far closer to the roof than at the beginning. With the coming of spring and the release of the cattle onto the fields, the consolidated mass of straw and dung that had accumulated beneath them would be taken out and spread as manure.

Stanley was never really able to look beyond that intensive, high-yielding sort of farming. To him it was excellence; the only way to nurture and use the soil. He would never accept that, for the greater part, such methods would not work in Australia. The notion of cost effectiveness was something he never understood. Emily would chide him for the lavish way he fed his hens. It would have been much cheaper to buy their eggs, she correctly pointed out.

The Hodgson motto is, appropriately enough, *Labore Vinctes* (By labour thou shalt conquer). Labour, in this sense, meant making your best effort with mind and body. One notes a similarity between this and the Craven motto.

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Chapter 5

Stanley: the Child

There were seven children in John and Anne Hodgson's family, five boys and two girls: George, Howard, Stanley, Malcolm, Norman, Anne and Helen. They lived for about ten years in Embsay, Yorkshire, before moving to Nocton.

Their house was an old priory connected to the kirk by a secret passage that had been blocked before their time. That passage had been a means of escape for clergy in times of persecution.

Ruth still has a book of nursery rhymes given to her and inscribed by her grandmother. It had been damaged by water in 1885 or 1886. Stanley could remember the occasion. There was a cloudburst on Embsay Crag. Cook heard a strange rumbling and went to the back door to see what it was. As she opened the door she narrowly escaped being crushed as the door was flung back by a flood of water that swept through the house.

There were no kindergartens in those days, and one of Stanley's earliest memories was being sent to an old dame's school in Bradford, at the tender age of 'half past four'. This was a type of school run by genteel elderly ladies for the children of gentle folk; a rather useless kind of boarding school. He was very unhappy. One winter's night he ran away and was found wandering the streets of Bradford in his nightshirt. The kindly policeman who picked him up took him back to the school and bathed him! After that, his parents took him home.

Stanley attended schools called Ripon Grammar and Tettenhall. These schools were popular among the commercial community. Among Stanley's schoolmates were boys called Brade and Cussons. Spades, made by a firm called Brades, could long be found in the hardware shops, and to this day, Cussons soap abounds on the supermarket shelves.

The boys of the family were inclined to be wild. On one occasion Stanley and one of his brothers made a bear pit, nicely covered over and

camouflaged, in the woods near their home. They then asked their father to come and look at something they had found. One on each side, they led him to the bear pit and in he fell. The boys ran for their lives and kept well away until their father's anger turned to amusement.

Another incident was treated with less forbearance. While playing Red Indians in an upstairs room, they decided to burn the fort. Part of the fort was a blackboard which would not quite fit into the fireplace. With it already ablaze, they decide to throw it out of the window before it set the house on fire. John Hodgson, below in his study, was shocked to see this blazing object fly past the window. This time the culprits were in trouble.

Stanley once caused havoc when he walked into a room where his mother was entertaining some friends to afternoon tea. He had a grass snake in his pocket and it escaped!

On another occasion he sat down to tea accompanied by his huge pet dog. The dog lay down under the table and after a while, decided to get up. He lifted the whole table and sent the tea things crashing to the floor.

Their wildness and ingenious pranking occurred not only at home. At school, Stanley and a friend decided to do some experimenting in the laboratory after school hours. They caused an explosion which blew out a corner of the wall. Although not expelled, they were in serious trouble and fathers had to pay for the damage.

An incident Stanley liked to relate occurred later in his youth. He and one of his brothers decided to 'catch' the ghost that was haunting the ruins of an old abbey. They succeeded, but not as they expected. It was the moonlight, shining through a glassless window shaped like a head and shoulders. As the moon moved, so did that window seem to move. Local superstition did the rest!

Another of his favourite stories was about the old parson at Embsay. Boredom had no place in his services. He kept a bamboo pole in his pulpit so that he might tap would-be sleepers in the front pews. Those pews were reserved for local gentry! But usually he kept them awake with the drama of his delivery: "And meat was set before him and he *did eat!*" One was left in no doubt as to the gluttony. And one could well envisage the lashing of reins and thundering of hooves when he cried: "The driving was the driving of *Jehu*, for he driveth *seeuriously!*"

During Stanley's youth, tastes different from those of his family emerged. He had a consuming interest in natural history and spent much of his time on the moors with the famous biologist, Thomas Henry Huxley,

grandfather of Aldous and Julian. Huxley, then elderly, was a strong supporter of Darwin's theory of evolution. Stanley remembered him as being faintly eccentric. He would do odd things like taking a snake home for his housekeeper to cook for his dinner!

Stanley was strongly influenced by the new and vigorous era in the study of earth sciences which emerged in the nineteenth century, and had a keen interest in the works of such scientists as Charles Darwin, Alfred Russel Wallace and Sir Charles Lyell.

It was an interest that stayed with him all his life, and one that was inherited by Ruth. She too was fascinated by the work of those evolutionists and the debunking of creationism.

In the choice of careers, Stanley's brothers conformed with convention. George went to Cambridge and became a lawyer, while Howard, Malcolm and Norman all became businessmen, with Howard by far the most successful. Stanley wanted to go into the navy, but this was vetoed by his family who decided that he too should go into business.

Chapter 6

Stanley: the Young Man

The Hodgsons had extensive interests in the textile industry, and at the age of seventeen Stanley was sent to the Continent with one of his brothers to learn the dyeing trade. At that time, 1893, it was virtually impossible to get dyeing done in England so that it would stand up to washing and wearing, except, for some odd reason, in the colour pink. The Germans were the ones skilled at dyeing, so to Germany he went.

Stanley was in Germany for about five years, and had a wonderful time while he was there. He was also in France and Belgium for some time. He liked the Germans very much, and the Scandinavians, tolerated the French and despised Southern Europeans! He even despised the ancient Greeks as cowards, but admired the Romans for their matter of fact approach to life and civil engineering ability.

He worked hard on the Continent, and played hard as well. Much of his time was taken up with revelry in the company of young military officers in the towns of Munich and Jena. These officers, on occasion, would show him highly detailed maps they had made of England in preparation for an invasion. They knew exactly where any building of any importance was in the whole of England. When he asked them if they were not afraid that he might go home and relate what he had seen, they said they didn't mind because nobody would believe him. They were right: he did go home and tell, and he was not believed.

At Jena, he and his brother taught students how to play football, both soccer and rugby. Football was not understood on the Continent in those days. Later in his stay on the Continent, an international football team was formed in Belgium. There were not more than two members of the team from any one nation. There were even some from South America.

As was the fashion in those times, Stanley had a German mistress. There was a fearful double standard. For a young man it was the accepted thing that he should support a woman, but for the woman it was considered shameful!

Stanley loved Germany and while there formed many strong friendships. World War I was a great sorrow to him. Ruth believes, moreover, that had he sensed the decadence that had developed in Germany, before and during World War II, it would have hurt him deeply. Homosexuality, which he abhorred, was rife in Germany during that period.

Despite the many diversions, he learned a great deal while in Germany, both about dyeing and about the machinery used for that purpose. When he returned to England he was commissioned by the family business to install dyeing machinery in one of their Bradford Mills.

He was given a tight schedule; it was close to Easter and the task was required to be completed first thing after Easter. Stanley informed his directors that it could be done if the men worked over Easter. This they would do if they were paid time and a half. The firm agreed and the work was completed on time. Stanley was a good motivator of men, and they had worked with a will.

He was aghast when the board went back on its word. They refused to pay the time and a half. He stormed out of the boardroom never to return. He often expressed his regret that there were no glass panels to shatter as he slammed the door behind him!

Stanley left the business world entirely. Although an ardent believer in the business ethic, he was never able to forgive that incident. Another man, equally honourable, might have lived down his disgust, but Stanley lacked the vocation. He was generous and romantic by nature, and did not have the sort of frugal, calculating mind needed to make a business pay.

Young, handsome and the son of a wealthy family, he must have been regarded as a good catch. One night at a dance in Bradford, which he never enjoyed very much, he alleviated his boredom by proposing to a woman. He never thought she would accept, but she did. For a while he wondered what on earth he should do. He had a brainwave. In the course of the same evening he proposed to two more, and they both accepted him. Word soon got around as to what he done and his name was mud. None of the three wanted to accept him any more.

Stanley couldn't stand Bradford society. He said the men worked like slaves to earn money and the women worked like slaves to spend it! He thought that sort of social life to be unnecessary: shallow, empty and serving no good purpose. Later, unfortunately, his aversion went much

further. He was often unable to distinguish between shallow socialising and the kind social intercourse that makes life richer and more enjoyable.

Stanley soon became tired of the life he was leading and decided that he wanted to live somewhere other than England. It had to be of temperate climate and populated with white people. Although kind and polite to all people, he was a racist to the core and could not abide the thought of living in a non-white population. The only place he could find on the map that seemed to fill the bill was Tasmania. Nobody knew anything about the place, not even at Australia House when he enquired! So, in 1898, he sailed for Tasmania to find out for himself.

Chapter 7

Stanley in Tasmania

Stanley was virtually penniless when he arrived in Tasmania, and had to work for his living.

He was first employed by a man called Sid Shoobridge, a man with extensive orchards who lived at Claremont, north of Hobart. One of his orchards was called *Clydesdale*, somewhere along what was then known as Dusty Miller Lane, now Tolosa Street, in Glenorchy. There is today a Clydesdale Avenue off Tolosa Street. Another orchard was called *Timsbury* and further up the road there was one called *Roseneath*.

Stanley learned a lot about orcharding from Sid. The two became great friends and Stanley stayed with him for some time.

Once, during this time, he went to stay with a family on a property at Richmond. In the evening he put his shoes outside his bedroom door to be cleaned, as was the custom in England. They were not cleaned. When he mentioned this, he had to be informed that in Tasmania you cleaned your own shoes.

Stanley accepted this, but never absolutely. Years later, while living in Tasmania, he was on occasions visited by one or another of his brothers. He always cleaned their shoes himself. It simply wasn't the thing that a guest should clean his own shoes.

Stanley wanted to see more of the Tasmanian countryside. He decided to go to the West Coast, about which he had been hearing a great deal.

He arrived in Queenstown without any money and got a job with the Mount Lyell Mining Company. He had not long started work when he was spotted by the General Manager, Mr Sticht, and asked how much he had to eat. Stanley confessed that he would have to wait for pay day before he had much to eat at all. Mr Sticht gave him a chit for a week's pay in advance and instructions not to return until he had had a good feed.

He had not been on the West Coast long before he became friendly with a man called Bert Fletcher. Bert was 'ganger' (foreman) for a gang cutting a track through to Hobart. With great eagerness Stanley joined his gang.

His workmates thought the name 'Stanley' too posh. He told them that his first name was actually Joseph, and he was called 'Joe'.

A product of the English boarding school system, Stanley liked his morning cold bath and would not be deprived out there in the bush. He would run naked through the snow and take a dip in the nearest creek. His amused workmates would line up and snowball him on his return to the camp. Stanley thought it marvellous to be snowballed after a cold dip in the middle of winter; it made him glow!

As was to be expected, that remote, tough, environment attracted some dubious characters. One evening in camp, one of the men copied Stanley's signature, quite skilfully. Stanley remarked that that was a dangerous gift to have, and the man agreed. If he had not had that gift, he informed Stanley, he would not be working where he was. He had once been a bank manager and had forged signatures for fraudulent purposes.

Another of his workmates was totally illiterate. With the aid of old newspapers, Stanley taught him to read.

It was a rugged existence. One of their number once gashed his head with an axe. The wound was superficial but it needed stitching. They washed it thoroughly with soap and hot water and sewed it up with linen thread and a darning needle. It healed well and quickly.

Even in those days, people used to go bush-walking for the pleasure of it. One day three girls walked past the gang. Greetings were exchanged and as the last girl walked by, one of men, a particularly rugged character, called out "God bless your bloody, bonny, blue eyes!" He really meant it. Starved of female company, it was wonderful to see a pretty girl out there in the bush.

Stanley loved his job on the overland; the countryside was so magnificent. Had he lived to this day, he might have been one of our most ardent conservationists. He could never have endured to see that wilderness spoiled.

Stanley's time on the West Coast ended early in the new century when his knee was crushed by a falling log. The doctors in Hobart said that he would have to lose his leg. "That for a yarn!" Stanley retorted. By that time he had some money, and with one of his West Coast pals to

accompany him, sailed back to England. On the voyage, his knee was swollen almost to the size of his waist. With the constant help of his companion, he returned to Nocton.

Once there, under the care of an English doctor who was renowned for his skill in manipulative surgery, his leg was saved. At the time, that doctor's methods were illegitimate, but later became a notable branch of medicine, and he was actually decorated for his contribution to medicine.

In 1902, John Hodgson died of cancer at the age of fifty six. His affliction was attributed to a severe injury he received at work while carrying something heavy and colliding with an open loom drawer. Those drawers were made of steel, and after that it was the sack for anybody who left one open.

It was a sad time for Stanley. He had been a wild, rebellious son but he loved his father. In turn with other members of the family, he would sit with him by the hour, anguished and helpless as he listened to his moans during the last, agonising days of his life.

By the standards of the time, John Hodgson died a wealthy man, but not extremely rich. He left an estate of five hundred thousand pounds, and Nocton.

Nocton, at the time, was being managed by Stanley's youngest brother Norman, and Stanley joined him. With more in mind than friendship and gratitude, he gave his companion from Tasmanian a job on the estate. He wanted to prove that men working an eight hour day, as they did in Australia, could get more done than those expected to plug on for twelve or fourteen hours a day. That man was a good worker and effectively demonstrated that Stanley was right.

It irritated Stanley that English employers generally remained unconvinced.

Chapter 8

Sunnybank, 1911 to 1916

By the time Stanley, Emily and Ruth moved to their new home, Sunnybank, in 1911, Stanley had received his inheritance and had an income of four hundred pounds a year. On this they were able to live quite well. The house was comfortable, not grand but suitable nevertheless for a well-to-do middle-class family.

It was in the parish of Skelsmergh, in the lake district of Westmorland, about four miles from Kendal. Within walking distance, a mile or so to the north, was a hamlet called Garth Row. There they could buy such things as sweets, stamps and bootlaces at a Dickensian little shop.

Once, when looking at the date, 1812, over the front door of their house, Ruth exclaimed that the place was so old, but her mother told her that a house did not begin to be old until it was at least a hundred.

Despite the fact that it had almost reached its century, it was modern and convenient in its design. There was a spacious entrance hall where Stanley had his desk, along with a multitude of books. There was a good dining room and sitting room, and upstairs there were four bedrooms and a bathroom with modern plumbing. There were also three attics, each with dormer windows; nice rooms in themselves.

The bathroom faced south into the sun, and had a bedroom on either side, each with windows at front and side. Ruth's room faced south and east. She could sit and play in the early morning sun before her parents got up.

The windows, as was usual with the better houses in those days, were made of plate glass. They were sash-type, but big sashes that let lots of light into every room. Ordinary glass in those days was always imperfect and could not be seen through clearly.

The artworks decorating the walls were all quite representational - Stanley would endure nothing else. Of these, Ruth liked best one called Mawdach Estuary. In it, the real atmosphere of Wales is captured. It has

the feel of Wales's misty mountains and swift streams. It still hangs at Colebrookdale.

A grandfather clock stood on the landing, half way up the stairs. Ruth would hear her father stop on his way to bed and wind it by pulling at its chains.

Ruth's bed was a magnificent antique. It was a big one with a tester (a canopy) at the head. She had heard her parents say that a man had once committed suicide by cutting his throat over the end of this bed. Far from being afraid, she thought this was most romantic!

But she did have nightmares. Dates in those days, were sold in narrow, round-ended boxes. Ruth once dreamed about two dark men standing in the doorway of her bedroom clapping these boxes and lids together. Their arms got longer and longer but fortunately she woke up before the boxes and lids were clapped on her nose. Another nightmare was of a train roaring towards her. This was a recurring dream, but it stopped one night when she stood up, in her dream, and dared it to keep coming!

An early fear was that the moon would get into her bedroom. She would have her bedroom window closed on the side near the moon. It didn't matter about the one on the other side being open. The moon didn't go around corners, it seems.

The big kitchen had a slate flag floor. Nearby, across the back hall, was the stairway down to a cellar which had flag shelves. On these were kept milk, beer and anything else that had to be kept cool. It was always cool in there, even in the hottest weather - summer weather can be hot in the north of England. There was also a beautiful, dry, wood-lined pantry where food would keep well. The storage space in that house was excellent.

In one of the attics there were wooden slat shelves on which apples were dried. By Christmas time these were incredibly sweet and delicious! Even now, Ruth can shut her eyes and remember their sweet smell. Another delicacy favoured by that unspoiled child, were the wild strawberries which grew under the huge pine trees on the property. The memory of that flavour also lingers.

Sunnybank had a lovely garden and grounds to play in, and it was surrounded by pasture lands with no nearby houses. There was a long lawn that sloped away from the front of the house, useful for riding downhill in the dolls' pram.

One day when doing this, Ruth went too far, shot through a bed of roses and landed on a path. The gardener working nearby went to her, amused, and said 'Coom 'ere lass; I'll pick 'e oop.'

'No no, Mr Jack Ridding,' cried the child, 'that was not a laffable joke!' It was her dignity that had been worst-hurt.

Another time, when she about four, she tripped at the top of a short flight of stairs on a railway overpass. Her mother and father couldn't catch her and she fell heavily onto the platform below. Her fall was mercifully cushioned by her teddy bear. Teddy used to groan when she rocked him. On this occasion he let out one fearful groan and never groaned again. Ruth still has that ancient, battered, groanless bear.

Ruth once had a mishap with a wax doll, a lovely little thing made by Belgian refugees. It was sitting on the edge of her bath and accidentally fell in. The hot water distorted its features. Much loving care was put into restoring the little face and hands. It was wrapped gently in a towel and put to bed in a shoe box, under Ruth's bed. Regular visits were made to ensure that she was quite happy.

Stanley kept a fine vegetable garden. The Hodgsons never bought vegetables. There was also a fine flower garden; not a great many flower beds but very showy; good borders; a rose bed; a lovely pergola with Dorothy Perkins and Crimson Rambler roses over it. At the back of the property was a wonderful shrubbery of rhododendrons. Ruth particularly liked the splendid raspberry canes. She could walk in the green aisles and pick the luscious fruit.

As well as growing their own vegetables, Stanley kept hens that supplied them with eggs, and they made their own bread. The flour was kept in a bin, and the yeast in a small gauze bag which was kept in the flour!

Sometimes Cook would let Ruth make a small bun when the bread was made. For some odd reason Ruth's buns were never quite as white as cook's loaves!

Stanley was also a keen rock gardener, an interest he shared with a Lancashire cotton magnate called John Foster. Stanley once promised him some plants, and Mr Foster arrived to get them from some twenty miles away on his bicycle! A true country lover, he preferred that to travelling by coach or car.

Landlords were tough in those days. Once when their landlord was visiting to check that everything was all right with his property, Ruth

revealed that Daddy had trimmed some trees in the little wood beyond the garden. It was forbidden to cut those trees, but the landlord saw the funny side of it and accepted the explanation that it had been done to improve them.

The driveway through the back garden would take Ruth to the stables where a coach and horses could be kept. It had a harness room and a loft which was one of her favourite places to play. One day while coming out of the loft, the lid, which was rather precariously balanced against the wall, fell onto her hand. Her loving father treated a squashed finger by bathing it in hot water and trying to knead it back into shape. It is not a very good shape even today.

At the back of the stables, a place where Ruth was not allowed to play, but sometimes sneaked a look, was a cess pit of red brick construction, probably about eight feet square. A board structure on this constituted what must once have been the only lavatory accommodation of that house.

Stanley did not keep horses, and the horse trough was used for the garden. Ruth used to watch the newts swimming in that trough.

The Hodgsons had a staff of four at Sunnybank, and this was reduced to three when Ruth no longer needed a governess.

The gardener, Jack Ridding, was probably the favourite. He was a fine big man, capable and good natured; a typical north country farm worker, the son of a small farmer. He was very strong and did most of the heavy work on the two or three acre garden.

When war broke out Jack was conscripted into the army. While on leave he complained angrily that the army had taught him to dig trenches with a miserable little spade and issued him with wheelbarrow that was little more than a shovel.

Strong and hard working though he was, and probably barely literate, Jack was not insensitive, as demonstrated on the occasion that he killed his pet robin. It was not exactly a pet but a sort of rapport had developed between the two. The robin would follow him while he was digging and catch worms that appeared. On this occasion the robin mistimed, spade and bird hit the ground together and the robin was beheaded. Jack was dreadfully distressed.

There was a cook-general and a house-parlour maid. With no kitchen maid, the cook-general kept the kitchen, pantry and other rooms related to that area, clean and tidy. The house-parlour maid looked after the rest

of the house. Although a high standard was demanded, their work would not have been onerous. There were not many people to look after, and Stanley and Emily were both orderly and fastidious in their habits. Always after washing his hands, Stanley would remove all smudges of dirt from the basin!

It was not even as though there was any laundry to be done. The clothes were put in a skep (a large basket) and sent to a Kendal laundry.

Some tasks Emily insisted upon doing herself. One was trimming the lamp wicks. She was sure that nobody else could do it properly. There were never any smoking lamp chimneys in her house.

Until being sent to boarding school at the age of nine, Ruth was taught by a governess. The village schools in those days were crude, to say the least, and quite unsuitable for a child in her position. The children who went to them chanted their tables and might have learned to spell simple words, but rarely to write a decent letter. They were happy but grubby little souls. Their corduroys, worn for weeks on end without being washed, were inclined to be smelly.

Among the various governesses, one was a girl of German descent called Miss Fecht. Her father was German and she had been born in England. Stanley drilled Ruth in the correct pronunciation of her name before she arrived. To a man who had lived in Germany and knew the language the Anglicised version would not do.

Ruth liked her very much, but she was a quiet, mousey little person who probably didn't have the personality for the position. She was not with them for long.

Another, a Miss Fanny Irving, was the daughter of the widow of a local bank manager, who had been left in reduced circumstances. In those days, a young woman in that position had little chance of getting a job unless as a nanny or a governess.

She had a good broad outlook on life and was quite well educated. She gave Ruth natural history lessons by taking her for walks and picking pieces of shrubs and other plants at various stages of development: bare, in bud, in full leaf or full flower. They would take them home, draw or paint them and make notes.

She was a particularly nice person. Indeed, Ruth was always happy with her governesses. Each was new acquaintance in her rather solitary life.

The Hodgsons were good employers who kept on excellent terms with those who worked for them. Emily was kind and civil, yet could keep them in their place. That did not mean they could or would be imposed upon. There was once a dreadful row when Emily helped herself to a slice of cold ham for a mid-morning snack while inspecting the cellar. Cook was furious and went to Stanley complaining that Mrs Hodgson had taken some ham! How could a cook do the catering if people helped themselves without asking her permission?

As was usual in English households at the time, the Hodgsons had three main meals and an afternoon tea. Breakfast was at nine, dinner at one, afternoon tea at four and a cold meat supper for parents at eight thirty or nine. Ruth would have something sustaining like an egg for her last meal for the day at four.

Afternoon tea was an important meal; a fill-in between dinner and supper. There would be four or five things to choose from: fruit cake (a must); 'madiera' or seed-cake (also a must); petit fours perhaps; jam tartlets; thin sandwiches usually filled with mustard and cress in the summer, or bread and butter (one or the other a must); hot scones and butter, muffins or crumpets in season.

After a serious operation, Stanley couldn't have a big evening meal, so they continued with midday dinner, unless he was out all day when they would have dinner at six, never later.

Among business and professional people it was more usual for dinner to be at night, but there was always midday dinner and a cold supper on Sundays. This was to give the staff a clear afternoon off and a chance to go to evening church service.

In those days very few people had cars. Lord Lonsdale who lived further up the country had a car, very smart and modern, painted in his coaching colours, a vivid canary yellow. It was the wonder of the countryside!

The Hodgsons had neither car nor carriage. If they wanted to go shopping they would get Jack Ridding to cycle four miles to a livery stable in Kendal and order a victoria. This was a small carriage drawn by one horse, with seating for two passengers, and room for a little one as well. Travelling through the countryside in that was fun.

On visits to Kendal they would go to the Kings Arms Hotel for lunch. A favourite treat was their cold salmon and mayonnaise. The Kings Arms was an old coaching inn, with its front door opening onto the street and

an archway leading to the courtyard. Around the courtyard, on the first floor, was a gallery leading to the rooms. In the kitchen, there were great wooden settles where coachmen and others once sat. Another touch of Dickens!

Stanley bought his beer by the barrel. Ruth recalls listening while her father and the brewer discussed the various brews. The October brew would be the most suitable they might decide, and Stanley would buy a small barrel to keep at home.

From time to time fairs would be held. These, in fact, were stock sales where stock and produce would be bought and sold. It was even an occasion for hiring and firing employees. One old farmer who lived not far from the Hodgsons would make prospective workers, men or women, walk across the room for him. "Show me how they walk," he would say, "and I'll tell you whether they'll be any good as workers!"

Farmers' wives, proud of the cheeses they had for sale, would give people tastes as they walked by. One old dear shattered Emily and Stanley by a digging out a piece of cheese with a pin from her hair!

Sunnybank was quite near the Great North Road to Glasgow and sometimes Ruth would hear a distant rumble. She knew that if she hurried up the long drive, past two fields, she would be able to see long trains of lorries on their way south to be taken to the front in World War I. They were enormous; each must have carried a ton!

There were signs that the war was not far away. On clear days they could feel the vibration of naval guns being tested at Barrow in Furness, thirty or so miles away. Solid though they were, the windows of Sunny Bank would shudder! Ruth also remembers seeing men marching over wet cobblestones in Bradford, on their way to London and France, in 1914. All she could really see of them was their boots and puttees. She was puzzled. What was this thing called war?

Sometimes they would go for trips into the lake district for which they would hire a car at Kendal. Ruth recalls the driver once asking her Aunt Nelly if she would mind working the petrol pump on the dash board as they climbed the steep Kirkstone Pass. Later, in Tasmania, Ruth remembers some of the old cars having to back up the Sidling, near Scottsdale, because they had gravity feed. By our standards those early cars were primitive, but they did their job.

One day Ruth was taking a walk in the countryside with her mother when a car stopped and they were addressed by an American who was motoring with his family. Were they going far? Wouldn't they like a lift?

He thought it extraordinary when Emily declined and explained that they were taking a walk. Going for a walk! He couldn't understand how English people liked to walk. Surely they could ride in something?

Already, with the advent of the motor car as a more or less normal mode of transport in the 1910's, the safe and efficient Hansom cabs were declining in numbers, but Ruth remembers riding in one with her father during a visit to Bradford.

One of Ruth's favourite walks was along a cobbled lane built by the Romans. Even at the early age of eight or nine, she was fascinated to think that here she was walking on a road built by another people so many centuries ago!

Her father used to take her for walks over the fells to little lakes called tarns. When she got tired he would carry her, often for many miles, on his shoulders. He was a tall man and that gave her a splendid view. It was good of him, she felt, to take her for walks like that. It developed in her a natural love of the land she lived in.

Sometimes they would take a walk to a farm called Skelsmergh. Ruth loved its old stone buildings, which were quite like many of those seen today on the television show, 'All Creatures great and Small'. That farm was wiped out in World War I by bombs jettisoned by a homing German aircraft.

Ruth has always had an empathy for plants and animals; things that seed and grow. It can be seen today in the profusion of life in her rather wild garden in Lauderdale, Tasmania. She sees it as expression of that same basic fecundity that led to her having a large family.

Always a keen walker, Stanley loved to clamber about the mountains of the lake district. Ruth recalls one of those lakes, probably Thirlmere, as being rather gloomy, but it appealed to her tremendously. She learned recently that it had been the sight of a stone age 'munitions factory'! The volcanic rocks in that district were particularly suitable for making weapons and these were traded all over Britain in prehistoric times.

She has never lost her love of lonely, rocky, rather eerie places. Green fields were good to play in and she loved the colours of flowers, but it was the lonely tarns and forbidding mountains that she preferred.

Appropriately for a man who liked to tramp about the countryside, Stanley was an avid collector of birds' eggs. He was always careful about what he took and the way he blew them; one hole only, slightly bigger than the inserted blow pipe.

Some of these he gave to Ruth which she kept on view in her playroom. These she loved, but she had to endure the misery of seeing them picked up and crushed by visiting children. Those little brutes had no sense of the beauty of the things, and Ruth was forced to behave like a lady and do nothing about it. She hated those children to go into her playroom.

All in all, Ruth was happy as a small child living at Sunny Bank. It is odd that she remembers neither snow nor rain while there, although there must have been plenty of both. Her memories are of sunny days; and of winter only the lovely log fires in the evening.

Chapter 9

Influences on a Child's Life

Stanley was a stern parent. For any serious misdemeanour there was a spanking. This was always administered with his bare hand, but he was a strong man and Ruth dreaded those spankings. She would hide under a table, anything, in the hope that he wouldn't find her, but he always did. Bed wetting was dealt with in this way. She would have dreadful dreams and lie on the damp spot until morning in the hope that it would dry.

He was particularly severe about lying. Even the suspicion of a fib would earn a spanking. She was once spanked for a lie she hadn't told. An adult's word was taken against that of the child.

Only once did Stanley condone her telling a lie. Their fox terrier, Judy and her three-parts grown pup had joined up with a group of dogs and gone sheep chasing. Sheep had been killed and the two dogs, particularly the pup, returned splattered with blood. Stanley reasoned that the pup was beyond redemption. Having engaged in sheep killing at that early age it would be a habit from which it could never be broken. The older dog, on the other hand, would be unlikely to do it again provided she was kept away from other dogs. Stanley washed and dried Judy thoroughly but left some blood on the pup.

The killing was investigated and the police called at Sunnybank. When asked to tell them whether Judy had been at home on the day of the killing, Ruth insisted that she had. She knew it was what her father wanted and she could lie to save the dog's life. Nothing was ever said about it, and Judy never offended again.

Throughout her life Ruth has found lying an effort. It is something she will resort to only in the interests of others, and then very rarely.

For all his strictness, Stanley was a kind and loving father. There had been those lovely walks, and there were times when Ruth would spend beautiful hours curled up on his knee, sleeping, while he read. They were close to each other, father and daughter.

Stanley was sometimes called 'Growly Bear'. Each evening before she went to bed Ruth was allowed to play in the sitting room, stark naked, doing gymnastics on the arm chairs and settee. Emily would worry.

"Stanley, Stanley! Don't you think she'll hurt herself?"

"Mmm," Stanley would reply from deep down in his chest, without looking up from his reading. It got him the name 'Growly Bear'. Whenever he was asked something while thinking of something else, he would say "Mmm."

Her parents would have been surprised if they had realised how much of life's realities Ruth was able to absorb simply by sitting and listening while her elders conversed, believing she wouldn't understand!

She remembers her father fulminating against the managing director of the White Star Line when the Titanic went down. The captain had wanted to slow down when he heard that icebergs were about, but the managing director wouldn't allow it; he wanted the ship to make a record run. She also remembers, in later years, hearing him rant against Lloyd George and the introduction of death duties, and against Bonar Law for she knows not what!

A man of strong attitudes, Stanley's favourite terms for men he thought stupid were 'blithering idiot' or 'blithering old woman'.

Stanley had no patience with the all too common illogicality of women's clothes. At the time of their marriage Emily Hodgson wore fairly full skirts, right down to her ankles, and had the good fortune to be slim: both fashionable in the early twentieth century. It was fortunate that she was so slim because Stanley Hodgson had strong views about things like corsets. Ruth once found in an attic an old corset of her mother's. It had a formidable superstructure designed to give the wearer a splendid bosom, and ended at the waist, except for a vee point which extended downwards to keep the stomach flat. Ruth learned that her father, having found her mother wearing this thing, tore it off her and said she was never to wear one again!

She didn't. In fact she did not wear a corset of of any kind again until the nineteen twenties when she was middle aged. But the corsets of the twenties were much kinder to the body than those beastly Victorian creations. Although she had put on weight, Emily always had a good figure and never at any time in her life looked obese.

Stanley was greatly amused by an incident in 1913 in which his younger sister Helen was hampered by her skirt while trying to catch a

bus. It was, according to fashion, a hobble skirt, extremely narrow all the way down to her feet, like a tube, with a slit about six inches high to allow the feet to move a few inches. The women who wore them literally hobbled! Helen was so exasperated that she bent down, grasped the two edges of the little slit and ripped hard, whereupon she was able to run and catch her bus.

As to what underclothing saved Helen's modesty is a matter of conjecture. She was probably wearing knickers that came down to the knee and had a sort of frill that came down to the ankle: 'broderie anglaise'.

Helen was certainly not thin skinned. A fine driver, she did her bit for the war effort, during World War 1, driving lorries in London. One cargo which used to amuse her was chamber pots, visible in their slat-sided crates. The bawdy remarks of the waterside workers as she drove away from the wharf left her unperturbed.

Stanley was pleased when, in 1915, Emily joined the new fashion and took to wearing 'short' skirts. These reached only half way down her calf and allowed her to show her ankles which he thought very pretty. They were rather full and often in plaid pattern which lent itself to pleating and looked charming on a slim woman like Emily. But Ruth still remembers her mother pleading: "Stanley, do you think they're decent?"

It was about this time that two young people, a brother and sister, used to cycle from a nearby town to pay the Hodgsons visits. The sister, Nora, had taken to wearing cycling trousers which had come into fashion. This was considered very 'fast'. She added to her 'fast' image by smoking cigarettes. Emily didn't approve and was sure that Nora was a 'lost woman'. This, fortunately, was not true.

Ruth's own attire had once been the subject of her father's wrath. He discovered, when she little more than a new-born baby and not very well, that she had, wound around her, a flannel binder, about a yard and a half long and six inches wide. The purpose of this was to keep the baby's umbilicus in place! Stanley was appalled. He pulled and he pulled until he got the 'damned thing' off, and threw it in the fire! She did not wear another binder.

Ruth got her first pair of bloomers in 1914, at the age of nine, just before going to boarding school. She was delighted because until then she had worn knickers which were buttoned up at the top, and at the back had a flap which buttoned up at the sides. A small child in a hurry to use

the lavatory had first to struggle with the buttons. The bloomers were much more efficient, to say nothing of not having the problem of shedding buttons!

Her first hat that she can remember was given to her at Sunny Bank. It was a cream straw hat with a band of daisies - 'hat' roses which resembled Banksia rosebuds. When very small Ruth was given a story book which had one story which covered the hat styles for ponies! It delighted her. She still loves daisies, in the lawn, and Banksia roses.

For his own part, Stanley moved slowly with the fashions. He never wore a nightcap, Ruth recalls, but he did wear a nightshirt that came right down to his ankles. It was not until after they left Sunnybank that he took to wearing pyjamas.

Emily was an indulgent and loving mother. Ruth liked to make salads of all the pretty leaves in the garden, weeds, flowers and anything else that grew. She would take the salad to her mother, on a saucer, and insist that she eat some. Ruth would nibble some herself and Emily, not at all sure that it was safe, would daintily pick up a morsel and hide it in her hand while chewing and pretending it was delicious!

Emily was not always perceptive. One night in bed, Ruth heard her mother playing the piano. It touched her and she cried. Emily came in later and saw that she had been crying. When told the reason she could not see that beauty could make one cry. She was sure that the maid or the governess had been cruel to the child.

Emily's relations with her daughter were sometimes marred by her bitterness at the way she been received by Stanley's family. That bitterness spelled the end of some of Ruth's toys. One of the family had given her a model horse and cart which was beautifully made and could be rolled along on its wheels. One evening, while she sat on her father's knee, her mother started playing with it on the table, rather roughly Ruth thought. She pleaded with her mother to stop it or she would break it. Thereupon Emily sent it flying across the table, onto the floor.

Ruth's Uncle Howard once gave her a textile top around which yarn was wound for weaving. This was removed by Emily during the night and destroyed.

Emily never liked her daughter to receive presents from members of Stanley's family. The only exception was Stanley's mother. The things Anne Hodgson gave her granddaughter were altogether too nice to destroy; lovely things such as a dolls' shop and a dolls' butcher's shop.

From time to time during her life Ruth has felt an antipathy towards her mother and it is probable that such behaviour was at the root of the problem. Emily couldn't see that, far from defeating Stanley's family, she drove Ruth away from her and towards them. Nor could she see that, although Ruth was fond of her father's family, she didn't see all that much of them, and she loved the things they gave her simply for what they were.

One of the great changes that Ruth has seen in the age in which she has lived has been in attitudes towards those less fortunate than ourselves. She once visited the local village with her governess and was taken into a house where there was a message to deliver. They were asked to tea, which was very pleasant, but one of the sons of the family that lived in that house was retarded. This did not shock her in any way, but her parents were most annoyed that she should have been allowed to see anything like that. Somebody who was mentally deficient!

Shortly before leaving for Tasmania, when Ruth was ten, the family visited Nocton. While there, she played with the gardener's children at the bottom of the garden. She rarely had other children to play with and she enjoyed herself very much. Later, she was scolded and told never to go near them again. It was feared, presumably, that she would get fleas and a bad accent, perhaps even enter into forbidden conversations!

Attitudes to work have also changed. Ruth remembers seeing men sitting at the roadsides knapping; sitting with piles of stones between their knees, gradually breaking them into little pieces. Today, with our advanced technology and production techniques, monotonous, totally repetitive jobs hardly seem to exist. If they did, it is doubtful whether people could be induced to do them. Early in the century, there was a preponderance of such jobs.

Ruth must have been all of seven years old when she fell deeply in love with a sergeant major of the territorial army. She would see him when she was taken to cricket matches. While her father played, she would sit and gaze at that marvellous creature. People would remark on what a good girl she was. They knew nothing of what was going on in her heart. She would walk with her back as straight as a ramrod. Her mother would tell her not to walk like that; she looked like a soldier! Little did she know! In all, it lasted about one cricket season, but it left her with the habit of holding herself up straight.

It was proper in those days for children to be taught to walk with their toes turned out: Nor' Nor' East and Nor' Nor' West. Ruth refused to do this. she had read somewhere that Indians walked with their toes turned in, and they knew how to walk, so she persisted and got into trouble.

She was once grieved by the death of a young woodsman. He had been hit by a falling tree and later died of tetanus. Her mother thought she was putting it on, but it was not that at all; she was distressed by the passing of a young life. It seemed so dreadful to be finished at that age.

Ruth was looking out her window at the garden when she heard that war had broken out. She was terrified. Her only knowledge of war was in her history books where men charged about on horse back. She had horrifying visions of cavalry storming over the fields into the garden of her home. It was not the danger of people being killed she feared, but the mess those horses hooves would make of her father's roses! It was an image of soldiery that she held until seeing men marching in Bradford.

Ingenuous though she was about the nature of the devastation it would cause, she was at least right in envisaging cavalry. In that early part of World War I it was still a reality. She was fascinated by pictures in the Illustrated London News of kilted Highlanders charging into battle, hanging onto the stirrups of the mounted cavalry.

War had never been far from her life as a small child. The Boer War had ended not long before she was born and she often heard Jack Ridding sing a marvellous song with a chorus which was all the battles of that war.

Inevitably, the horrifying side of war became a reality. Once when staying with an aunt in Hull she saw a warehouse going up in flames. It was presumed to have been set alight by spies to act as a beacon for German planes.

On another occasion, while the family were visiting Stanley's mother in London, a zeppelin crashed in the outskirts of the city. They drove out to see it and found that it had draped itself over a huge old tree. Ruth was fascinated by the miles and miles of glittering aluminium tangled about the skeleton of that tree. She felt neither sorrow nor horror at the dreadful thing that had happened. The horror came, along with the disgust of her parents, when the crowd rushed forward to look when somebody said that the pilot had been found, half buried in the ground.

The direct impact of World War I was not so great upon civilian life as World War II. There was a frightful loss of life in battle, of course, and

few escaped the loss of loved ones, but rationing of such things as food, clothing and petrol was mild, whereas it was quite severe, even in Australia, in World War II. Prices of some things, however, were high. Eggs were sixpence each!

For all its horrors, the war had its funny side. To this day Ruth is inclined to say to people who grumble about their lot: "If you knows of a better 'ole, go to it!" It was also one of Stanley's favourite sayings. It originated from Bruce Bairnsfather's cartoons of World War I about a veteran soldier called Old Bill and some raw recruits. They were sheltering in a shell hole one day and a raw recruit said he didn't think much of the place they were in. Old Bill replied: "If you knows of a better 'ole, go to it!"

Old Bill and the raw recruit were sitting in the ruins of a house one day. In one wall there was a large shell hole.

"What made that 'ole, Bill?" the recruit asked.

Disgusted at the youth's stupidity, Bill replied, "Micel"

The word "Micel" became Stanley's, and later Ruth's, stock reply to a silly question.

Another of her stock sayings is to refer to any sort of container of probable future usefulness as a useful jar even though the useful jar might be a plastic carton. Stanley, upon finding an empty tin, would say that it looked like a useful jar and keep it for nails. The saying originated from Winnie the Pooh who, whenever he had finished a jar of honey, wouldn't throw the jar away but say, "I think that's a useful jar," and stow it away.

Indeed, anything that Stanley found, a piece of wood, a piece of string or a piece of cloth that could be hoarded for future use, became a useful jar!

Like Stanley, Ruth's grandmother, Anne Hodgson was stern and exacting. When Ruth was small she lived in a house in Paynes Lane, in the exclusive London suburb of Pinner. Once, while visiting her there, Ruth found some lovely, long, red-velvet curtains. She used one of these as a robe to play at being a fairy queen, descending the stair-case, walking beautifully. She was caught and scolded severely for using those beautiful curtains. It did not seem justified. She was not hurting them; the house was always spotlessly clean and she was never rough with things.

Her Aunt Helen hurt her cruelly on one of those visits to Pinner. Ruth had wet her bed. When she walked downstairs in the morning, Helen looked at her and said, "You filthy little beast!"

Those people didn't understand that the child didn't want it to happen. They thought she was just a dirty, lazy little beast. Only her mother was sympathetic. Emily was much more sensible in that way than her in-laws.

Helen, praised be, had a better understanding with her pet parrot, Polly. It was beautiful grey and red bird. Before taking Polly out for a walk around the garden, Helen would look at him severely and say "Polly splosh!" Polly obliged by emptying his bowels. Then he was allowed to jump onto her wrist and would stay there wherever she took him. Eventually, when it was decided that they would leave Pinner, he was given to the London zoo, where they would visit him from time to time.

Ruth's Uncle Norman who had been to South Africa brought back with him to Pinner a meerkat, a type of African mongoose. It was hardly a suitable thing to take to an old lady. It was ill-tempered, terrified and unhappy. Ruth wanted to get to know it better. Half afraid of it, yet half friendly towards it, she teased it unwittingly, putting her hand towards it, then pulling it back. It bit her and had to be destroyed.

Ever after, Ruth felt a sense of guilt. It wasn't the poor creature's fault; it was ridiculous thing to do with any animal; and it was unfair that it should have been taken from its natural habitat and killed because it couldn't fit into strange and alien surroundings.

Helen, like many others, was bereaved by the loss of a loved one in the war. Her fiance was killed while flying in the Flying Corps. She was caught on the rebound by a rather unpolished scottish businessman called Jock Pringle. While in London, Ruth used to take trips with her when she went to meet her prospective husband. The liaison was being kept quiet because it was unlikely that her mother would approve. As it happens Anne would have right; the subsequent marriage was not a success.

Jock was apprehensive about Ruth's presence. "What about the child?" he said in a taxi one day.

"Oh, she's all right!" Helen replied.

Ruth felt grown-up and proud. She could be depended upon. For all the fact that truth had literally been spanked into her, she could if necessary, act out a lie, just so long as the lie was to help somebody else and did not affect her.

Being alone so much, Ruth was not good at coping with disputes with other children. Today, she and her cousin, Christopher, correspond amicably but they did not always get along so well. Once, during a visit to her Aunt Gwen and Uncle Malcolm, who lived in a house called the *Priory*, in Bath, she fought with Christopher, then eight or nine, for possession of a boot button-hook. The palm of her hand was torn and she bore a faint scar for many years. In consequence she feared Christopher and they did not go there again.

As a small boy Christopher used to throw his Teddy in the fire and wait for his nanny to rescue it. One day she taught him a lesson. She made him watch it burn. It cured him, but Nanny was dismissed.

Ruth remembers a photograph of Christopher when he was about four, and his little brother, taken in about 1908. They were dressed as the children were dressed in that age: in dresses, close-fitting about the chest with flared, knee-length skirts; white pantaloons with frills around the bottom exposed for several inches below the dress, coming down to just above the calf!

He also had long curls, and when his father insisted that they be cut off, his mother was so distraught that she took herself off to the Mediterranean to recover!

A fetish among well bred people in England at that time was they should be bilingual in English and French. As small children before going to boarding school, Christopher and his brother had a French governess. The governess had to be French because the average English person found it impossible to acquire a reasonable French accent.

Ruth was not always at loggerheads with other children. Somebody once gave her a child's tea set: cups, saucers, tea pot, hot water jug, and cream jug, complete with a folding table with a blue and white top. When children visited - the same ones that had broken her eggs - they would sit, most dignified, around the table on the lawn, sipping nursery tea: very weak with lots of milk.

Another relation they sometimes visited was her Uncle Howard who lived in Bradford in a house where Stanley's brothers had lived before they were married. Howard stayed there for some years after the others had gone. They had two housekeepers, sisters, one plump and amiable whom they called Baa Lamb and the other rather sharp-tongued called Miaow-wow (to rhyme with cow)! Baa Lamb used to take Ruth shopping at the big open market, which she loved.

Throughout her life, Ruth tended to be introverted. She had a strong awareness of herself: the essential 'me'; the quality that made her somebody different from everybody else; something of which she and nobody else was aware. She wanted to achieve things in life, that essential 'me': to be outstanding in something; to learn a second language; to gain a degree. But at that time, when she was eight or nine, these were as yet dreams. She lived in a dream world, imagining all the nice, sometimes exciting, things that might happen to her.

Yet she was very emotional and responsive to the world about her. She loved music. She loved sounds and smells and the colours and the feel of nature, the grass under her feet and all things that live. To this day she can be hurt if she carelessly destroys a flower or the web of a spider.

For all this she was a child like any other child. One of her loves was Stone Ginger Beer. There is nothing like it now. It tasted home made. The bottles were earthenware, about the size of a stubby. They were sealed with a sort of marble in the neck and were opened with a wooden utensil that fitted the outside of the neck and had a small projection in the middle that pushed the marble down. The bottles were always cool and nice to touch. The drink was just the right temperature. It tasted good.

All in all, Ruth was a happy child. Sometimes things went wrong but she was never one to sit around and mope, not even when she was longing for something different from what she was experiencing at the time. As well as the love that was always in her home, she was content with her environment. Wherever she was, she could adapt and be happy.

Chapter 10

A Young Lady's Education

As a small child, Ruth always begged never to be sent to a girls' school. It was an attitude influenced in no small part by her reading. *Boys' Own Annual* was her favourite reading for years. Stories like *The Stolen Grand Lama*, *Submarine U93* and many schoolboy stories, she delighted in, while she loathed the *Girls' Own Annual* which seemed so incredibly namby pamby. Its stories emphasised nineteenth century virtues in women and never looked forward to the twentieth century.

The prejudice was dispelled when, at the age of nine, she was sent to St Felix, one of the finest girls' schools in England.

Ruth was there for only two terms, but the impact on her life was enormous. It was the first time in her life she had been free of the immediate influence of her parents and able to relate to other children. At the end of those two terms she was a far more grown-up child than that little person who had been afraid that soldiers might ride their horses over her father's roses. She was far too young to be sent to boarding school, of course; she was the youngest girl in the school, but that didn't really matter. After being homesick for a while she became supremely happy.

Situated in Southwold on the Suffolk coast, St Felix was about as far away from Ruth's home as anywhere in England. Her first remembered experience of train travel was that long journey; all the way from Westmorland to London and then on to Suffolk. The greatest impression was made by the last part of journey when she joined the quaintest of little trains that fairly crawled along a narrow track. Even though she travelled first class and the backs of the seats were covered with white antimacassars, her head had to be fine-combed in case she had picked up lice in the carriage.

The wrench of being sent to boarding school might have been severe on so young a child had it not been for the excellence of the teaching. Her mathematics had never got beyond basic arithmetic: addition, subtraction,

multiplication and division. She had not even been introduced to weights and measures, and had learned nothing of fractions and decimals, but thanks to the skill of those teachers she took to it all like a duck takes to water!

The French teacher, Mlle Bouquet, known as 'the Bucket', was one such teacher. She was small and vivacious, and would bounce into the classroom with the greeting: 'Bon jour mes enfants. Vox phonetiques!' with high-pitched emphasis on the last syllable. She gave them a grounding in the study of French for which Ruth has always been grateful.

History for the younger ones, Ruth recalls, entailed the study of the history of a different European country each term. She learned about Poland and her struggle for freedom, and learned a poem about Kosovo Day.

Like the teachers, the matron was also a marvellous person. With careful psychology she cured Ruth's bed wetting in one term.

There were two hundred and fifty pupils at St Felix, all boarders, except for one girl who was allowed to attend as a day girl because she had a weak heart. There were four houses when Ruth was there. Today there are ten. She wrote to the school recently, saying how pleased she was that it gone ahead so much and done so well. For this she received a charming reply from the head mistress.

When she arrived at St Felix, the war had already made its impact. Its situation on the coast was considered dangerous, and different premises were found. The school was actually split into two. One part was in Wales, and the other, where Ruth went, was in Alfreton, in a mountainous part of Derbyshire, where somebody had lent their country home. It was wretchedly cold and there was no indoor sanitation to speak of. In order to wash, the girls had to use water that was frozen over in jugs in their rooms.

On wet days, during winter and early spring, the school combatted the cold with a kind of 'follow my leader' with exercise books balanced on their heads, upstairs, downstairs and around old meandering passages. As those in front shed books they would have to fall back in line, while those behind would pick the books up and advance in the line. The head prefect, Philippa Pugh, who had a fashionable slouch, soon went to the back, while Ruth, the smallest in the school, was soon right in front! This

may have been helped by the habit she had developed of imitating the straight-backed men of the territorial army in Kendal.

Although she hated the extreme cold, Ruth loved that big old house, and she liked the boarding school life.

After one term, it was decided that conditions were too cold in Derbyshire and that part of the school returned to its original home in Southwold. The other part, for those girls whose parents didn't want them too close to the scene of the war, remained in Wales.

Their nervousness had some justification. About a year after Ruth left, the school at Southwold was actually shelled. The Germans made the excuse that they had mistaken it for a barracks. Stanley was sure they were lying. He remembered those maps he had seen as a young man in Germany at the end of the previous century. They had mapped just about every bit of England and would have known exactly what they were shelling.

St Felix in Southwold was far different from the grey and white memories of Alfreton. It was green and sunny in the summer term. The grassy playing fields sparkled in the sun. There were many things about that school that she liked: the big, airy rooms; the long sweeping staircase in the school house; the fine big assembly hall; the splendid gymnasium. She even enjoyed the colours of her exercise books.

She adored the gymnasium; she loved using her body: climbing, running, eurhythmics.

In the boarding House, every girl had her own little desk. On it were two shelves where books, ornaments and photographs could be kept. Yours, where you did your homework, in your territory! She had nothing quite so personal at home.

Another of Ruth's pleasures at St Felix was her garden. It was quite small; perhaps a metre and a half or two metres square. Here, again, was something of her own.

School uniform at St Felix was unchanged for many years, both before and after Ruth was there as a pupil. The girls wore a tunic with a blouse in summer and a warm, woolly sweater in winter. The tunic length was correct when the girl knelt on the floor and hem just touched the back of her knee. That same knee length continued until quite recently. It was worn by Ruth's daughters when they first attended Fahan School, Hobart, in the 1950's. Ruth regards the longer tunics, which later became the fashion, as inelegant by comparison.

The sweaters the girls wore at St Felix were made by a fishermen's co-operative. This work gave the fishermen of the district an occupation during the long periods of foul weather that prevented them from fishing in the North Sea. Each girl had two sweaters, a heavy one that was dark green and a lighter one of rather pretty leaf-green with dark green collar and cuffs.

For 'Sunday-go-to-meeting' clothes, - coat and skirt - they had a choice of colours: brown, dark green and another that may have been navy. Most of the girls chose brown. Ruth thinks this custom rather delightful. It gave them a sense of individuality, yet maintained sufficient uniformity to identify them unmistakably with the school. ('Sunday-go-to-meeting' was a joking expression they used, the meeting relating to church services known among Methodists as meetings).

The head prefect was the only one not compelled to wear uniform. She wore plunging necklines and fashionable skirts: civvies all the time. She even walked with a fashionable slink, somewhat stooped.

'Punch' had a little rhyme at that time:

Once the swing was forward.

Now fashion's looped the loop

And girls who ape the dernier cri (last cry; last word in fashion)

Cultivate a stoop.

Discipline at the school was strict, but good. There was a rigid system of hierarchy. The prefects had a strong measure of control over the girls. For misdemeanours they handed out the detentions. On one occasion, by way of detention, Ruth was required to learn a piece of poetry. When she took it back after about fifteen minutes with the task completed, the prefect told her that she couldn't possibly have learned it in that time.

"Please, but I have."

"Then let me hear it."

It was recited perfectly and Ruth remembers it to this day. It starts: 'This is the forest primaeval...', by Longfellow.

The headmistress of St Felix at that time was Miss Silcox, nicknamed Silky Locks. She was a squarely built woman, slightly mannish and rather fierce, but always seemed to have a cheerful smile. She was a person of tremendous personality, people liked her and she was popular with the girls. She was, nevertheless, quite strict, and would tolerate no questioning of her authority. A highly educated woman, she exemplified

the advantage of such a good school in being able to draw their staff from graduates of Oxford and Cambridge.

Visits could be paid between girls in the different houses. This had to be done properly. A visitor for afternoon tea should stay for only twenty minutes. It caused amusement when Ruth, at the age of nine, called on some bigger girls and stayed for an hour. They were good-natured girls who didn't really mind because she was very little and having a lovely time.

Everybody was given a go at sport. They were rostered every day and no girl was left out because she was a 'rabbit'. They played cricket, tennis, lacrosse, hockey and basketball, most of which Ruth enjoyed very much. There was far more sport there than at the Collegiate school which she later attended in Hobart.

They were taught to swim, in the sea, by a tough, calloused old fisherman who was reputed to have once found and knocked the horns off a German mine! Those who knew him believed it was true. He was not much of a teacher and hadn't much patience with a little girl who was timid, but Ruth enjoyed the lessons just the same. That North Sea water always seemed to be dark and was rather frightening, but she loved its feel. She looked forward to those lessons.

Another joy was the walks on the flat East Anglian plains with their lovely green trees; a treat after the snow-bound lanes of Derbyshire that made walking undesirable; but not the same as her beloved Westmorland fells.

Among the many girls Ruth got to know at St Felix, some have made an impression on her memory. There was Joan McKloskey Westfeldt. She came from Canada. Her mother was an old Pelician so Joan was sent there to complete her education. In Ruth's words, she came like a breath of fresh air! She had a beautiful voice and was a great acquisition to the choir. She simply disregarded rules if she felt they were just stuffy old rules. It was never for her to be like a mouse, just because it was the *thing* or the rule to be like a mouse. She made as much noise as felt like, yet she was never rough or crude; she was just full of life and fun; quite different from the stereo-type, well-behaved English schoolgirl. A delightful person.

Another was the Fairy Bluebell. Her real name was Joan Waterlow. Her family, immensely wealthy people, were well-known printers of

banknotes and stamps. Her father was the Lord Mayor of London. She got her nickname from a part she once had in a play.

Joan was a prefect at the time, and the gentlest and sweetest of people. Ruth liked her very much and being very young and not knowing better, once put her hands over her eyes while following her downstairs and said "Guess who?" Joan took it well but the rest of Ruth's class sent her to coventry for several days for behaving in an unseemly way towards a prefect.

When Joan left school she gave away all her considerable personal wealth to the International Labour Organisation and went to work in a poor part of London. She joined a labour community where people supported themselves by their own work: an act of defiance against a society that allowed excessive wealth and excessive poverty.

No school is complete without its cad. Judith Masefield was a horrid little girl! She was a mean, sneaky person, about two years Ruth's senior. She once hurt Ruth badly by breaking open her cash box in order to read some poetry she had written. The cash box was the one possession each girl had that was both personal and private. It gave Ruth great satisfaction when she got a better mark than Judith for an essay they were assigned.

Nor did she think much of Judith's father, John, when he came down on Speech Day. He looked such an insignificant little man, not at all like her own fine big daddy. But these are only the reactions of a very young child, and she does admire John Masefield's poetry.

Chapter 11

Departure for Tasmania, 1916

In 1916 Stanley became ill with a gangrenous appendix. Ruth, then at home, woke one night and fancied that shadows cast on the wall by her night light, a small, lead-weighted kerosene lamp left burning, were in the form of a hand. She was scared and ran to her parents' room. There she found her mother scared stiff and her father desperately ill.

A young locum, who knew what he was doing, packed Stanley off to a specialist in Bradford. He was then put in the hands of Sir Barclay Moynihan, a distinguished Leeds surgeon. When he operated, Sir Barclay was so impressed by the gangrenous colours of Stanley's insides that he had them painted, swiftly. There was no colour photography in those days. While still in Hospital, Stanley was gleeful about this. He loved bright colours!

Stanley was informed that he could expect to live no more than another six months, and in his weak state he longed for the warm Australian climate. He decided that they would go to Tasmania and he would die in the sun.

They moved out of Sunnybank and lived in Morecambe for a short time. Stanley at this time was confined to a diet of raw meat, raw eggs and milk! It so revolted Emily to see him eating raw meat that he broke the rules by eating it between paper-thin slices of bread and butter. He would break the eggs into a glass of milk and swallow them like oysters!

While they were at Morecambe Ruth had a strange experience. During a visit to Grange-over-Sands she had a trip to the Amazon jungles! She was playing with other children and they decided to explore the Amazon. Into that feature of English gardens called the shrubbery they went, scrambling through a tangle of branches. One of their number was 'injured' and had to be carried back to civilisation. Because she was the youngest, the lightest and easiest to carry, Ruth was chosen to be the

casualty. On a stretcher made of coats they carried her to 'safety'. She was to keep her eyes shut during the journey, they told her, and she did.

Magic happened! She *was* in the jungle. The shrubs in her mind's eye became strange, towering trees. Sounds and scents seemed to change. Scrambling children were tramping explorers. When at last she was told to open her eyes it was a fearful disappointment. She was back on a sunny lawn in England!

After Morecambe, they stayed at Harrgogate where Emily's sisters lived. Stanley's cousin, Ruthie Harker, also lived there. Ruth would go down the Valley Drive and visit Ruthie. One day when her parents missed her, they went to Ruthie who said, "Yes, she's here, under the bed singing Irish Eyes are Smiling!" Ruth wondered why they were so amused. It wasn't her fault that Ruthie kept her music in a case under the high bed.

Once, when returning home alone, Ruth got to the middle of the lovely Valley Gardens and forgot the way! She had been day dreaming. Bewildered, frightened and quite lost she had the sense to sit down, then ask a woman the way to the Drive. It was about three hundred yards away!

Finally they stayed with Ruth's grandmother, Anne Hodgson, at Pinner. Anne gave her a little diamond and platinum brooch as a goodbye gift.

Ruth was at St Felix when told that she would be going to Australia. She stood looking across the playing fields and seeing, as though it was a long, long way beyond the horizon, a shining city in full sunlight. The city in her mind was Sydney. She had heard people speak about it.

Because it was war time, Stanley had to obtain a special permit for the issue of the passports. It was given to him as a concession to a dying man.

The ship they sailed on, the *Athenic*, was armed with one little gun to use against enemy submarines. This was unshipped in Dakar, West Africa, for another ship to pick up and use on her way home. Passengers were all issued with life jackets and obliged to attend boat drill.

The *Athenic* was chartered by Shaw Saville and Albion from the White Star company. She had two classes: first class taken by those who could afford it and second class usually by nice people like impecunious clergy. The difference in standard was pronounced. Second class had a pathetic little bit of recreational deck at the stern, while first class

seemed to have acres and acres of deck. Even as a child, the inequity made Ruth feel slightly ashamed.

Travel on a ship like that was very comfortable, akin to the standard of a good family hotel; nothing very swanky; just good solid comfort.

They sailed around the Cape of Good Hope, the Suez then being out of the question. A stop in Cape Town gave them the chance to travel up the Table Mountain, where the flowers at the time, late spring, were beautiful. A less delightful memory of Cape Town, was the spectacle of a Portuguese ship with a decor that included pink and yellow!

On direct route to Hobart, they crossed the Indian Ocean. There was a heavy swell, providing the children aboard with a great deal of fun. As the ship plunged into a trough, they would run helter skelter down the companion ways, then struggle up the steep incline as she raised her bows. This must have been annoying for those older, less hardy passengers who were suffering in their cabins.

Among the passengers, travelling with his family, was Eustace Cameron, a member of the prominent family of graziers from Mona Vale in Tasmania's midlands. One day, one of the younger Cameron children, a girl called Alison, espied a bugle on a chest. She picked it up and blew it, lustily. By chance, the note she blew was 'G', which, unhappily, was the summons to the deck in the event of attack. The children were astonished by the sudden rushing of people, even greasy-faced men clambering out the engine room.

Allison was later summoned to the Captain's cabin. She never told anybody what he said, but for a time she was most well-behaved.

This natural, happy association with other children was fun for Ruth and made all the better by the fact that Mrs Cameron gave them lessons every morning. Ruth found no pleasure like learning and Mrs Cameron remarked to Emily how attentive she was.

They arrived in Hobart in the first light of a November morning and anchored in mid-stream. Ruth was delighted by what she saw from her porthole. Hobart was not a bit like ports as she knew them; Cape town or Tilbury. Everything looked so fresh and cool, and the mountain, so close to the town, was splendid. It was all so new and exciting!

It was not quite what she had envisaged back in England, when she told her schoolmates at St Felix that she was going to Tasmania. She had imagined she was going to a land where there was lots of sun, lots of sand

and lots of green fields! She was right about all three, but there was a great deal more besides.

Chapter 12

Early Life in Tasmania

Ruth had an early lesson in the difference between the Tasmanian and English environments. It happened soon after their arrival in Hobart. The Hodgsons were staying at a boarding house in Kingston, a few miles south of Hobart, while looking for a house. Ruth went to put her hand in what might have been a rabbit hole and her father pulled her back. In England, she had been taught to put her hands in holes to see what was there. It could not be done in Tasmania because of snakes.

There were many little differences, she discovered, between life in Tasmania and life in England. One was the salt. In England it was bought in long blocks, about five or six pounds in weight. It had to be grated. It was strange to find that the salt in Australia, mined in dry lakes, was loose. In Tasmania, they ate mandarins, imported from the East, instead of the tangerines imported from Africa which they had in England.

There were odd things about the weather. In England, a warm summer's day stayed warm in the evening, but in Tasmania there would be strong, cold, sea breezes, and a cardigan would be needed in late afternoon. In winter, in Tasmania, there was no snow, except on mountains. And in Tasmania the sun shone from the north instead of the south!

Some of the differences made Emily angry. In Tasmanian country hotels they would offer tea with the main course at dinner. It simply wasn't done. Nor did she like being asked if she wanted a return, not a second helping, nor some more. She would remark that she didn't want to return her dinner!

They found a house to rent in Glenorchy, on the Main Road. In those days the Main Road, which linked Hobart and Launceston, was unsealed and fairly quiet. While Ruth was at school, girls whose parents came down for the Royal Agricultural Show would sometimes take her with them, and they went out, along that road, in a cloud of dust.

One of Ruth's great pleasures was the trams. The double deckers, in particular, were fun because she could ride on the top, going bumpety bumpety, especially where they got up a bit of speed on Sandy Bay Road near where Wrest Point is now. A good excuse among day girls for being late to school was that the tram had come off the line. It often happened but nobody was ever hurt; they just lost their tracks!

For those who wanted to travel by car, they hired, not a taxi in those days, but a Broughton cab.

Soon after they arrived in Hobart, the Hodgsons decided to take a trip up Mount Wellington. Stanley hired a car and driver. As they drove up the hill the motor boiled. While this was being fixed, Emily and Ruth got out and went to look at the scenery. The young driver began to take the cap off the radiator, with Stanley still sitting in the car. The eruption of steaming water sent Stanley leaping out over the back while the young man took a dive for the gutter. Cars were like that in those days. It was hired from a quite reputable garage.

At that time Stanley liked to go for walks on Seven Mile Beach. It was a lonely place, almost due east of Hobart on Frederick Henry Bay, not nearly so accessible as it is today. A car, best described as a jalopy, would be hired in Bellerive, on the eastern shore of the Derwent, and in this they would travel over a frightful sandy switchback to the western end of the beach. There they would bathe and collect birds' eggs and seashells.

Even a visit to friends in Lindisfarne, also on the eastern shore, was an event. The ferries were good, but from the jetty it was a long, dusty walk to their friend's house. There are now large residential suburbs on that side of the Derwent, but in those days the houses were scattered and few.

Soon after landing, Ruth had a bad attack of tonsillitis. Stanley walked down Macquarie Street looking at doctors' plates. As now, that was where most of Hobart's doctors had their surgeries, but in those days most of them actually lived there as well. Stanley was looking for one with an Edinburgh degree; the Edinburgh medical school was of the highest repute. So it was that they met Terence Butler who was to be the family doctor for many years.

A joy which turned to disaster for the ten year old child, was a visit to Stanley's former employer Sid Shoobridge, at Roseneath. The apricots were being harvested and Sid told Ruth she could go out and get herself some. She had never seen anything so lovely as cases and cases of

beautiful apricots. They didn't grow like that in England. She had a feast of sun-warmed apricots and made herself horribly ill.

Everything was so different, but not once did Ruth regret leaving England. She always wanted to move forward, not dwell in the past.

Stanley soon tired of living near a city and they moved onto the East Coast where they lived at the Scamander Hotel for about eighteen months. Ruth enjoyed herself there. It was a quiet little seaside resort but there always seemed to be plenty to do.

A constant source of enjoyment was the Scamander River. She got great pleasure out of rowing up that river. Her father had taught her how to row well and she enjoyed the physical activity.

One day, while swimming in the river, Ruth suddenly and inexplicably forgot how to swim. It was extraordinary; she had been swimming for years! Of all the people in the accompanying boat nobody noticed except a girl called Marie Lines who was then probably in her late teens. She saw that Ruth was in trouble and pulled her in.

Marie and Ruth were later to become neighbours. Marie married Dudley Ransom who had a farm called Cranston at Campania, about five kilometres from the property of Colebrookdale where Ruth lived.

Notwithstanding that one near mishap, Ruth loved to swim in the cold, clear water of the river. This was fortunate because the beach at Scamander was safe only for strong surf swimmers.

The Lady Betty Copper Mine was on the Scamander River and a man called Walter Windred, an old, experienced assayer, had the mining rights. He had been an assayer in England but had lost his job after salting a mine. He then became Government Assayer in Western Australia, but again fell from grace and took to prospecting.

He had what he called his assay office, a large shed near one of Scamander's two hotels. Ruth and Stanley called on him often. Stanley found Mr Windred interesting to talk to, and the old man would let Ruth work with him. She was allowed to weigh out the catalysts and help with such processes as making small buttons of silver. It surprised Stanley that a girl of twelve could be entrusted with such exacting work, but Mr Windred knew that she could do it properly. Ruth still has a small silver button and a big copper one, as well as a copper slab, which he gave her. She treasures them very much.

Ruth once rowed up the river with her father and explored the old copper workings. There was one entrance, not safe to enter into very far, which shone in torchlight with splendid peacock colours on the walls; water oozing over thick native copper.

Another pleasure at Scamander was being able to play with the children of visiting holiday makers. One of these was a boy called Bobby Crisp who was to become the father of Caroline Crisp the wife of Ruth's son, Robert. Another was Charles Davies, son of the Managing Director of the Mercury newspaper. If annoyed with anyone he would say to them "Run away, evaporate, bubble up and bust!"

For a short while at Scamander Ruth had a pet ringtail possum. She loved it dearly but was not allowed to keep it. Other guests in the hotel were terrified of it!

It was at Scamander that Stanley taught Ruth to like huntsman spiders. One fell into the river one day. He rescued it and let it run over his hand. "Put it on your arm," he said. "Let it dry on your arm. They're quite harmless." Then about twelve, Ruth was afraid, but she trusted her father's judgement and let it climb up and down her arm. She has been fond of huntsmans, and of all spiders in fact, ever since.

After a time, Emily became bored at Scamander. There was really nothing there for her but the hotel, the beach and walking. She started getting quarrelsome with the other guests. They left and went to the St Helens Hotel. Even though St Helens was a small, quiet town, there was great deal more there to do.

Soon after moving to St Helens, Ruth had another love affair, like the one with the sergeant major at Kendal. This one was an ex-army officer in his mid-thirties. She admired him immensely, from a distance. Mercifully, these desperate, unrevealed, love affairs of the very young are fairly brief; perhaps a year at the most. The girl of today probably copes by treating the object of her obsession as a pin-up, displaying his picture all over her walls until becoming sick of him and replacing him with another, but that sort of behaviour was not allowed when Ruth was young. It was the sort of thing shop girls did, as Stanley would say.

To have had an actual boyfriend would have been impossible. It simply wasn't done!

Once, while they were staying at the St Helens Hotel, a group of aviators arrived, one of whom was the noted Charles Ulm who flew with Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith. They were looking for one of their number who was lost. Stanley joined them in a search party that went out into the bush of North Eastern Tasmania, but no trace of the missing aeroplane or its flier was ever found. It was presumed to have ditched at sea.

While at the hotel, Ruth became anaemic. She was attended by Dr Gmelin who was to become a family friend. He prescribed a daily glass of burgundy. Good burgundy off South Australian ironstone, he declared, was the best medicine she could be given. She thought it tasted foul!

Ruth had never heard of iodine until she came to live in Tasmania. Cuts were treated with lots of soap and water, and with soaking in the event of infection. Unless the wound was big, it should be sucked and everything that came out of it should be swallowed Dr Gmelin insisted. This, he explained, gave an immunity against anything that was potentially harmful at the source of the injury.

They were looking for a house to buy and Stanley, who could never be far enough out in the wilderness, made a choice that appalled Emily. The house he preferred, Parkside, was owned by a man called Les Steel, a big farmer from Falmouth. It was some distance south of St Helens and for Emily, too isolated to be endured. She liked to be at least within walking distance of a town. Using all her guile, she paid a visit to some Launceston lawyers and managed to force a situation which committed Stanley to purchase the property Fair Lea which was within comfortable walking distance of the St Helens shops and post office. Mr Steel, fortunately, understood how things could be with women.

They moved into Fair Lea in 1918.

Chapter 13

Fair Lea

Fair Lea was a nice house, mostly on the one level, not particularly big for somebody of Stanley's means but more than adequate, nevertheless. It had a sitting room, a dining room, five bedrooms, a bathroom, kitchen, pantry, storerooms and scullery. Only one bedroom was upstairs and that was rarely used.

The staff of two could easily manage the work. The cook/general had only to cook and keep her part of the house clean. The house/parlourmaid had to keep the house swept and dusted, but did not do a great deal of polishing - Stanley would never have polished floors because he considered them dangerous. At each meal she would bring the food to the table but did not actually wait on the table. She also served afternoon tea. Laundry was never done at the house. There was always somebody in the township only too willing to take on that task.

The lot of the staff was made all the easier by the fact that Emily would not tolerate any untidiness from either Stanley or Ruth. And she certainly wasn't burdened with work, herself. These days, many housewives in houses just as big, do the lot, including the washing, possibly with some help from their husbands and perhaps a cleaning woman half a day a week.

The cook was paid thirty six shillings a week and the housemaid twenty seven and sixpence, later thirty shillings, both with full board. They regarded themselves as well paid.

One cook/general the Hodgsons had at Fair Lea was a woman called Annie James. Annie was with them for many years. She was thin and suffered from asthma. St Helens was one of the very few places in Tasmania where she could live. For all this she was strong and so long as she could keep clear of asthma, never sick.

She was with the the Hodgsons until they left St Helens to visit England in 1929, and rejoined them when they returned in 1930. She remained in St Helens while they were away and kept their two dogs,

Barry and Bingey, with her. Barry was a brown cocker spaniel and Bingey a wire haired, fox terrier. After long and enjoyable lives, and Annie's over-indulgence, they died of what was probably fatty degeneration of the heart.

Outside the house, Stanley was always able to find work for the local men. Emily, forever longing to escape her isolation, wanted a car and chauffeur but Stanley considered it his duty as a man of means to spend the money instead on providing employment to those who needed it.

Two such men were Roy Cross and Bob McMichael. One day while working together in the bush, Roy almost severed his toe. Bob carried him across his shoulders to Fair Lea expecting that Stanley would be able to help. They took him into the bathroom where Stanley struggled to do something with the frightful wound. Emily went to Ruth and told her she would have to take over. Emily was not much good at that sort of thing herself, and Stanley, by this time, was sitting on the edge of the verandah looking positively ill.

Ruth put on a tourniquet and a bandage, and managed to stop the bleeding. The doctor, unfortunately, was inexperienced. When he arrived, he ripped everything off and started the bleeding once more. He slapped a dressing on it and took him in his car to Launceston. By the time they arrived at the hospital the rug the patient was on was soaked in blood. As a result of that doctor's incompetence Roy lost his toe.

Ruth always wanted to be a surgeon but this was vetoed by parents. They told her she wasn't strong enough. At the alternative suggestion that she might become a nurse, they pointed out that it would be horrible to have to clean and care for dirty old men! Yet it was Ruth who had to cope when a man was injured.

Stanley would not give to charitable organisations, but was kind to individual people and supported the community in which he lived. His generosity was highlighted by his present of a complete cricketing outfit to the boys of the district: a mat for the pitch, bats, balls, bags, pads, stumps, bails, the lot! He wanted to encourage the sport in the community.

He played a great deal himself. Ruth's cousin George had great respect for his skill with a bat. Once, while a boy in his teens, George bemoaned the fact that he had failed to get into double figures. Uncle 'Joey', on the other hand, who must then have been nearly fifty, scored a good half century!

One of Ruth's favourite diversions was tennis. After some doubts by her mother and father she was allowed to join the local tennis club. She became known for her agility on the smooth, gravel court. Her club mates called her Pavlova, after the famous Russian ballerina.

Among her friends in that club were a brother and sister, Ewart and Francie Tucker. Their father was the manager of the Pioneer Tin Mine. Ewart became an important businessman in the area, and years later the owner of Fair Lea.

Stanley liked to keep up old customs. On New Year's Eve he would lay on beer and cakes for the revellers. They came happily, the young men of the district and some not so young, and would sweep the board clean! While this was going on Ruth and her mother were obliged to keep well out of the way.

Soon after buying Fair Lea, Stanley bought an old tin smelters next door. Materials were hard to get, transport was dear and he wanted the bricks from the chimney. The chimney was felled and a host of small boys were employed to clean the bricks. Pure smelted tin from the bricks and the furnace nearby paid all expenses.

A house next to the smelters, which had been the manager's residence, was bought by a man from near Launceston called Queechy Johnston. Stanley sold him the concrete foundation of the smelters for the lowest legal price, one shilling!

The Hodgsons were friendly with the Queechy Johnstons for years. Mrs Johnston amused them with the story of the time she asked the chinese storekeeper at Weldborough for a scarf. She was offered, with giggles, a sugar bag! The Hodgson's sometimes visited the joss house at Weldborough. It is now in the Launceston Museum.

Another of Stanley's projects was the clearing of land on the south side of the property, turning it into a kind of park. This entailed much felling of stunted and dead trees, and several bonfires. Emily loved the work of dragging the branches to build the fires.

Part of the project was to improve the track into the area. At one point Stanley had to cut into a low bank. There they found native earthworms, up to a foot long and as thick as a man's thumb. Emily did not care for them at all.

Always a keen gardener, Stanley decided he would like a show of daffodils on the bank alongside the south drive. He set about cadging

everybodys surplus bulbs, and Ruth and he planted them. Ruth was told, not many years ago, that those bulbs are still lovely in the spring.

Stanley had a penchant for beachcombing. He would gather up pieces of timber and turn them into useful furniture. Ruth recalls one piece about ten feet long. She had to hold one end steady while her father carried it. It was a dead weight and finally they left it where a truck could pick it up. The wood was well and truly seasoned in the salt water, and hard. It cost Stanley a fortune in plane blades. Ruth still has furniture made by her father from wood found washed up on the beaches.

When there had been a storm at sea, they would go for long walks on the beaches, particularly southward, sometimes almost as far as Scamander. This was a beautiful walk with a thundering surf, and there were always good sea-shells to be found. Stanley built up a fine collection of shells.

Once, while father and daughter were walking on the beach, they came upon a dead sea cow, obviously wounded in a fight with some other creature. Stanley wanted a souvenir, so next day he returned with his henchmen, Roy Cross and Bob McMichael, armed with axes. They cut out the teeth, some of which Ruth still has. The men smoked hard as they worked; the corpse was ageing!

It was a good life at St Helens, but there were some dreadful memories. One is the pneumonic influenza epidemic, a form of plague, that hit Europe in 1919 and swept the the world killing twenty million people. One of Ruth's old friends from St Felix literally dropped dead in the street. Tasmania was hit badly: schools and cinemas were closed; even the St Helens hall was turned into a sort of hospital. Doctors were brought across from the mainland to help tend to the sick.

Also, while they were at Fair Lea, a fearful tragedy struck the Briseis Tin Mine at Derby. An earth dam broke after heavy rains and the mine which was in the valley below was flooded with a shift of miners inside. Later, in the 1930's, the mine was flooded again. On that occasion the mine's second-in-charge was an engineer called Wally Senior. Ruth's third son, Joe, married Wally's daughter, Josephine.

A less distressing, but exciting memory of St Helens was the earth tremors. These were not serious but fascinating, just the same. At other times there were magnificent thunderstorms which Ruth and Stanley would stand and watch while poor Emily, who was terrified of thunder, hid in a cupboard!

More pleasant for Emily were the miraculous sunsets. As one faced west, towards the bridge on the road that passed below the house, there were all the brilliant oranges, yellows and reds on one side of the bridge and violets, purples and blues on the other, landward, side.

After they had been living in St Helens for some years, Ruth's Uncle George came with his family to live there. This was fortunate for Ruth because her cousin George, six years her junior, became her constant companion. They were like brother and sister.

He taught her to ride a bicycle. All she had to do to learn to ride, he told her, was to learn to fall off! "Don't worry if you feel the bike toppling. Just put your foot out as though you're dismounting." It worked; Ruth had no more trouble with her bike.

Ruth and her father would play bridge with the 'Georges', sometimes until the early hours of the morning. They would walk home happily, a mile or more, on frosty mornings. But it would not have been so happy for Emily on those nights. She must have been lonely. She was an indifferent card player herself, and didn't approve of her sister-in-law, Dot.

Chapter 14

Animals

They had lots of pets at Fair Lea: the dogs, a cat called James, a wombat, possums, kangaroos, wallabies and various birds in a great big aviary. The aviary was generally used as a haven for the injured. Ruth was interested in the work of caring for sick animals and kept a case book, which she still has, for all that she treated.

One such creature that had come to them in damaged condition was a man-faced owl. He looked ever so big and solemn, even rather frightening, but he was the gentlest of creatures. He liked to be stroked and if given a finger would take it in his great curved beak and run his beak back and forth along the finger, gently, almost imperceptibly, nibbling as though he was kissing it.

Stanley was not a lover of cats but James was an exception. He was cat of character. He had first attached himself to them while they were at the St Helens Hotel. He was devoted to Stanley and one night found his way into his master's hotel bedroom and presented him with a freshly killed fish. Stanley woke up to find a ten inch, slithery garfish beside his head on the pillow!

It was a generous offering because there was nothing James liked more than fish. He would hang about the jetty, and the fishermen informed Stanley that he would even swim out to the boats for a feed.

On another occasion he presented the family with a nice, freshly killed rabbit. He must have taken it up over the verandah roof and through the window, into the guest room which had been made ready for a visit by Ruth's Uncle George. The rabbit was found in the middle of the floor just as George was being shown into his room. A welcoming offer to the guest.

James was once bitten by a snake. He lay under a tank doing nothing but drink water for a week. To Ruth's great joy he recovered.

They always had lots of poultry, including a pair of Cape Barren geese and bantam hens. The bantams are fiercely maternal creatures. One of these once had a chicken stolen by a jackass. She flew to the top of a gum tree, probably forty feet high, and got her chick back!

At one stage they had a pair of quail. These produced lots of eggs that hatched into lots of chicks. The chicks never seemed to last long and it was feared that rats were getting them, so they let the quails go. Also prolific, were their farmyard geese. These were useful pets the Hodgsons found. Their large families came in handy as Christmas boxes for those who had worked for them, and other people they knew. When one of the females died, its gander fretted to death. They mate for life.

Another pet was a wounded turkey. Somebody had shot away part of her back while she was sitting on her nest. Her organs could be seen pulsating under the transparent peritonium. There was no veterinarian in the district and Ruth had to do the best she could. She filled the wound with a mixture of eucalyptus and sleeper grease (a heavy grease such as was used on the ends of posts and railway sleepers to prevent rot) and fed her well on soft bran and pollard-mash mix. The turkey recovered.

Turkeys are strange birds, Ruth discovered. They had a turkey hen that deserted her chicks. The cock took over and reared them faithfully.

Ruth once had a sick pullet that had to be kept in a box by the fire in her bedroom, then a bed-sitter. It became as attached to her as a child, but had the bad habit of waking her up at dawn for a feed! Quite a pleasant alarm clock, really. Also among her 'friends' were the Muscovy ducks. They would tug at Ruth's skirts at feeding time, greedy creatures!

They once rescued an injured penguin which had to be fed, at great inconvenience, on fresh fish. When it had recovered from its injuries Ruth and her father took it back to the ocean beach. It didn't want to leave them. The poor thing followed them, crying, and they had to hide from it in the dunes.

Ruth often went with her father on his long walks in the bush. One day when she was with him, barefooted, he suddenly yelled to her to run for her life. As always, father was obeyed instantly and without question. There was a snake with young behind her, to all appearances about to attack. Stanley roused the creature away. He would never kill a snake in the bush, far from habitation.

It was not only in the bush that she had an experience with a snake. Most of their walking was done on the beaches, and one day, while on the

beach, Ruth went for a run. She hurdled some seaweed and while still in the air saw a snake where she was about to land. Like an athlete skilled at broad-jumping she took a step in mid-air and managed to land clear. Stanley caught the snake and had it identified. It was a highly venomous sea snake.

Stanley had his own close shave with a snake. He was in the garden, cutting a cauliflower, when it struck towards his hand. He had just time to sweep it aside with a blow to the neck from that hand.

For Emily, that life among animals, close to the bush, was sometimes a pleasure and often a burden. She loved dogs, tolerated cats and was indifferent to most other creatures, except reptiles, particularly snakes, of which she was afraid. Others, as well, made her nervous. Ruth had a pet baby wombat called Banergee which used to follow her about the house like a puppy. Whenever it came near Emily she would jump on the nearest chair and cry, "Oh! Oh! Oh!" in a nervous way that she had.

Yet she had a compassion for small, perhaps unprepossessing creatures. Years later, at Colebrookdale, she found Ruth examining some invertebrates under a microscope and scolded her for her cruelty. Those creatures were small, helpless and must have had feelings.

Chapter 15

Travelling About

From time to time the family would visit either Launceston or Hobart. For all such trips Stanley would hire a car from the Thompsons, a family of local business people. The return trip to Hobart cost twenty pounds, and they could stay in Hobart as long as they liked, usually about a week. The Thompsons liked that arrangement; whichever one of them it was who did the trip, he too could stay in Hobart and do the shopping for the whole family.

Stanley never went to either city without returning laden with purchases of books or chinaware, or both. When the Chinese merchant, Chung Gon, opened his business in Launceston Stanley would buy all manner of lovely things from him. Ruth still has a butterfly brooch he sold them. Parcels sent to them by Chung Gon would be addressed: 'Mr J. C. S. Hodgson, Fairrea, St Helens.' He couldn't cope with the idea of it being Fair Lea.

The Thompsons had a fleet of cars, including a 1914 Napier, a fine English machine capable of sixty miles per hour! At that time Napiers were setting standards in automotive excellence. They held air, land and sea records.

The Thompsons had another Napier which had done 400 000 miles. They used it to take supplies to Eddystone Point. It had high clearance and was the only one suitable for the rough tracks.

It was decades before the roads in that district were sealed, and driving could be dangerous. The top of St Marys Pass was covered with blue pug - a kind of clay - and this was treacherous in wet weather. Once, when Ruth was being taken back to school for the winter term, they were almost to the top of the pass when their car suddenly did a 'U' turn. Emily and Ruth were given such a scare that they said they would walk the rest

of the way to the top. The driver pointed out that he had stay in the car. That shamed them; they got back in and were driven to the top without further incident.

In those days there was little comfort motoring in the wet. The cars had collapsible canvas hoods that leaked, and there were no windscreen wipers. If it was raining on their way to Hobart along the Fingal road, Ruth would have to stand on the running board and peer forward so that she could warn the driver of any deep potholes. She thought it was fun!

They set out one day in one of the Thompsons' cars for a trip to Ansons Bay. The driver mistakenly tried to take one of the hairpin bends in one go, instead of backing and filling. The car slid gracefully sideways over a bank and came to rest against some trees.

Nobody was hurt, and they walked to a farm where they waited until another car arrived from St Helens. While there they had a memorable tea: home-cured ham, home-made bread, butter and honey, and tea made with water from the tea tree swamp. It was delicious.

The family once took a trip to the far north east of Tasmania. They came to spot where there was a concrete slab commemorating the visit of a survey ship, H M A S *Geranium*. While there, Ruth spent a few minutes lying with her eyes closed in the dunes. She listened to the wailing of the gulls, the sea, and the wind in the sand, on the water and in the marram grass. She still hears and remembers the high violin note of the wind.

A favourite spot they sometimes visited was Binalong Bay, then called Boat Harbour. To get there they had to drive over a sandy, switch-back road, which was fun! While there, they would go to some gulches on the southern side where Ruth with any young friends who might be with them, often her cousin George, would go running, full-speed, on the dome-shaped rocks. Later they would have dips in the gaps between the rocks or catch crayfish on baited hooks.

They also liked to go to St Columba Falls. Ruth was there one day with George and another young friend when they went climbing and decided to cross the falls, then fairly dry, on a crack in the rock. George, then about fifteen, had done it several times before. Foolishly, Ruth allowed herself to be persuaded to follow. She was part way across when she panicked, and froze to the spot! One boy took one hand and the other took the other, one pushing and one pulling. "Move!" George commanded. She moved and they got her across.

She could not be persuaded to go back that way. They returned instead on a steep track beside the falls, surfaced with tree debris which sometimes made a false floor through which one could fall three feet. Ruth did not mind, but the boys hated it, giving her her revenge!

It was one or another of the Thompsons, in one or another of their cars, as often as not the old Napier, who taught Ruth to drive when she was fifteen. Her parents would sit in the back quite unperturbed while the somewhat less calm Mr Thompson beside her watched and gave advice.

There was not much traffic about in those days but what there was could be dangerous. Once, while driving under supervision, Ruth was confronted by a car being driven too fast, on the wrong side of the road, on a blind corner. She drove off the road into the scrub. Emily was shaken and Mr Thompson had bruised ribs where Ruth's elbow had struck him as he tried to grab the wheel, otherwise little harm was done. The tough old car was not much damaged, and Mr Thompson assured her that she had done the only possible thing. Stanley brushed the whole thing off as an amusing little incident.

Responsible for more than their share of furious driving in the district was a family of brothers called Wardlaw. They were farmers who lived at the bottom of Elephant Pass, south of St Helens. Some people went so far as to argue that they helped to keep the roads safe, so cautiously did others drive in case they met one of them on the road! Stanley probably found it in his heart to excuse them because they were good cricketers as well as being enterprising drivers.

One of the Thompsons, called Monty, was not impressed by the Camerons of Mona Vale. One day in 1919, when he was driving the Hodgsons home from Hobart, they called in at Mona Vale because they had given Ruth's school friend, Alison, a lift. He was surprised at having to drive on a driveway knee-deep in grass. Their neglect of standards, however, didn't apply when it came time for lunch. He was shown into in a small room, alone. He was not suitable company to dine with the Camerons.

At that time his own family must have owned half of St Helens. His father, known as Gimlet-eye, had extensive business interests including St Helens' two hotels, mail coaches and a string of cars. This, Monty believed, made his family quite as important as the Camerons of Mona Vale. He was livid and it took him most of the way home to recover.

Alison showed Ruth over Mona Vale, an amazing place with its 'calendar' geography: fifty two rooms, three hundred and sixty five windows etc. Huge though it was, it was run by only three women. Many of the rooms were not used and were cloaked in dust. The Hodgsons were used to seeing houses of far fewer rooms and three times the staff.

Sometimes Stanley would hire a boat and they would go down to the heads of Georges Bay. There they would picnic on mussels or cockles cooked over a camp fire. One day when it was calm they went out into the open sea. The swell, even on that day, was heavy enough to make it clear why the entrance was dangerous.

In 1927, the ketch, *Alice*, went aground and was lost there. Ruth has a snapshot of her foundering and from it has done five paintings. The 'Alice' had a deck cargo of kerosene packed in four gallon tins, with two tins to a wooden case. They floated. It was a long time before kerosene was asked for again in St Helens shops!

Chapter 16

Friends and Acquaintances

For all the fact that St Helens was small and rather remote, it was a happy phase of Ruth's life. It held much that shaped her future. Her love of nature, the bush, the sea and all they contained, was fostered. They had interesting friends what was more, and it was there, thanks to one of those friends, the Reverend Nicolas, that she eventually became a serious student.

Among those friends were some of her father's intellectual calibre, educated people to whom she could listen: Dr Gmelin; the scholarly Reverend Nicolas; the venerable and also scholarly Reverend L'Oste; the misfit priest, Father Barrie; Mr Grant the lawyer.

Dr Gmelin, was a German, of a family of distinguished scientists, and was himself a brilliant diognositian. Even in his last days when confined to the Hobart General Hospital, he was able to help tremendously with diagnosis. His misfortune was that he was a drug addict. The victim of a bad marriage, he had taken to drugs and ultimately, like others, went to hide from the world in St Helens.

He would visit Stanley and they would spend hours discussing European politics. While sitting talking he would be jabbing his stick on the hearth. For this he would apologise to Stanley, admitting that he knew there were no cockroaches there but he had to hit them nevertheless. He was hallucinating under the influence of drugs!

He played the piano superbly, and sometimes would play for them on Ruth's piano. That piano is now at Colebrookdale, where Ruth's son Joe and his family now live.

When not under the influence of drugs Gmelin was a good doctor, but he could be unreliable. One morning he went hurrying to Stanley and asked if he had taken much of the medicine he had given him the night before. Stanley said he hadn't; he always halved any medicine he was

prescribed. Gmelin was greatly relieved; he had made up the wrong prescription! You took your life in your hands, those days!

Nevertheless, he was not as bad as some of the young and inexperienced doctors they had later.

Mr Nicolas was slightly built man who had retired from the clergy when found to be suffering from tuberculosis of the throat. He had come out from England to the better climate in the hope of recovering. This he managed to do, and he kept himself occupied by coaching students. He did it as a thanksgiving to God for the restoration of his health, but there is little doubt that he enjoyed it as well. And he was good at it, as Ruth discovered when he became her tutor.

The Reverend L'Oste was an extraordinary man. When Ruth knew him he was a very great age. He died at the age of a hundred and six. As was usual with English clergy, and not always so usual with Australian clergy, the Rev. L'Oste was well educated and well read. He was a former student of Cambridge University, and while there, a keen cross-country runner. He came to Tasmania for appointment to his East Coast parish and was a clergyman there for many years.

Well into his nineties he could be seen, leaning forward, beard flowing, with a long stick in his hand, walking with long, determined strides on his way to collect his pension.

When he first arrived in Tasmania, he would run from service to service in a parish that extended from Fingal to Weldborough, more than one hundred kilometres, not the whole distance in any one day, of course, but nevertheless a remarkable feat of stamina and endurance. The burden was eased somewhat when some parishoners clubbed together and bought him a bicycle.

On the occasion of his hundredth birthday somebody unearthed the bicycle, tidied it up and put it on the stage during the festivities in the St Helens hall. All could see how the clergyman got about in Mr L'Oste's young days. Telegrams on that occasion came from far and wide, some from his old Cambridge college.

Even in his hundreds, his brain was clear as a bell. He was frequently able to help with Ruth's tuition. If ever stuck over a point of Latin syntax or wishing to discuss some finer point about the works of Shakespeare, it was always to Mr L'Oste that Mr Nicolas would turn.

A few months before the old man died he was attending a birthday party at the home of Mr Nicolas. He stood up, holding onto the back of an

arm chair, and recited Tennyson's 'Northern Farmer' (old style). He then sat down, apologised for sitting, explaining that he was a little tired, and recited the 'Northern Farmer' (new style).

He was a delightful man. Emily who was very fond of him once asked him if he slept well. He told her he didn't; he slept rather badly, but he didn't mind because he didn't need the sleep and he always saw such beautiful things while he lay awake. He was always thinking of lovely gardens!

Father Barrie, the Roman Catholic priest at St Helens, was a quite different type. He was well educated, but a former orphanage boy who had been pushed into the priesthood without any real vocation for the calling. He was a big man and an interesting conversationalist. He and Stanley were great friends. Sometimes when Stanley offered him a glass of beer he would reply: "Faith and t'goodness no! I'm doing penance." He had already had more than his share a night or two before.

When offered a cup of tea or coffee he was inclined to answer: "Put a drop of the *owld cratur* (old creature) in it, and then it won't taste so dry." (Put a drop of whisky in it and it'll taste better).

Henry Grant, the solicitor at St Helens, was highly qualified and Stanley used to say that he was good at his work, but he had once been involved in a scandal with another man's wife and had been obliged to leave his practice in England and take himself to an out-of-the-way place to practise his profession.

He was an old man when Ruth knew him, an Edwardian to the hilt. He walked with a ramrod back, so straight that people believed he must have worn a corset. Whether this is so is not certain, but he definitely added a little colouring to his otherwise ashen cheeks.

His wife had died and he lived alone. Every few months he'd go on a drinking spree, shutting himself up in his little house while everybody waited, hoping that he wouldn't die of the drink.

Henry Grant often visited the Hodgsons, having cups of tea and reading a little Latin with Ruth. He was quite fun but Ruth and Stanley became tired of his Edwardian sense of humour. On one occasion he was complaining about the inefficiency of his cleaning lady. "And I wouldn't give twopence for the freehold of her!" he added.

They thought this to be in very bad taste.

Years later, when he was ill and dying, Emily took pity on him and would go to see him, long after Stanley had become sick of him. He asked

her if she would write to his people in England because he wanted them to know what had become of him. She did this and they were very pleased that she had. It was typical of Emily; she always had time for the lame dogs!

Among Ruth's friends at St Helens was a young woman called Marjorie Conder who had come there with her mother because of her health. She was riddled with tuberculosis. Both she and her mother were well-liked, and Ruth, by that time grown up, would visit her with the other young women of St Helens.

While they sat on the verandah the local market gardener would call with the vegetables. "Full of them there vitamites, Miss Conder," he would say.

When, to their sorrow, Marjorie died, she was buried in the local cemetery, about one and a half miles north of St Helens. It was all done correctly, according to custom of the time. The coffin was placed on a board on top of an open motor car, and the funeral director, who was the local carpenter, walked ahead of it in proper gear: a dark suit; a tall hat and a long, black scarf hanging down his back from the hat. They all followed in vehicles at the pace of that stately old man as he walked with a long stick, the quintessence of sorrow and respect for a young person who had died.

One of the ketches that brought supplies from Launceston (including Stanley's orders of bran and pollard for his poultry) was commanded by Captain Tom Holyman, a true old-fashioned sailor-man. He would call on the Hodgsons, fair weather or foul, to play crib with Stanley and Ruth. In rain he would arrive shining-wet in his oil skins. While there he would eat lots of fruit cake and drink lots of coffee.

With his gnarled old hands he would most skilfully knit silk jumpers, then very fashionable, for his wife. The silk always stayed clean.

A less reputable character in St Helens at that time was a delightful scamp with the unlikely nickname, *Dog-Bite-Me!* He was a fisherman and tin scratcher with about twelve children and always in debt. His favourite exclamation was 'Dog bite me', and that was how he got his name.

One day, cheerful as ever, he went to the butcher with a sack of tin to pay off his bill and get some meat. The butcher ran his fingers through the tin and found it to be of good quality. The bill was receipted and the meat supplied. Not until some time later did the butcher discover that

what the sack contained was half tin and half gravel! He dared not sue because he would have been the laughing stock of the town.

Chapter 17

A Young Lady's Education in Tasmania

Ruth began her Tasmanian education at the Church of England Collegiate School, now called St Michaels Collegiate School, at the beginning of 1917. It is no indictment of Collegiate that it was not as good a school as St Felix. It did not have the space, nor the massive backing of wealth - the patronage of some of England's rich families. It was some relief to Stanley, however, that the fees, at the time, were only eighty pounds a year, compared with one hundred and fifty at St Felix.

The teaching staff at Collegiate were not graduates of Oxford and Cambridge. Some had graduated overseas, some at the University of Tasmania and others were undergraduate teachers, only half trained. There were some who had no special qualification at all and, oddly, these were sometimes the best teachers.

One in the last-mentioned group was a Miss Charpentier who was a bundle of skinny vitality and goodwill. She taught a subject called Physiography, a melange of elementary Geology and Geography at a very basic level. It was fun, especially when she took them on expeditions. There was no science, as such, taught in the school at that time.

'Charpie' as she was called, had two sisters, one as plump as she was thin and the other just average. They would twitter together like happy sparrows. Years later, Ruth and her husband visited them at their house in Kingston which was filled with beautiful old chinaware and oak furniture which they had inherited. One of their treasures was an ancient oak grandfather clock in which hung a skeleton hand!

Their father, Ruth learned recently, came to Tasmania early in the century to an appointment in the Art Department of the Hobart Technical College.

One of the teachers, a Miss Dubabin who was learned in history, had the extraordinary habit of returning exercise books by hurling them at the girls across the classroom!

Ruth had had no experience of nuns or Sisters of the Church before, but found nothing strange about those Sisters at Collegiate. They all seemed quite normal; just people!

Unlike St Felix, which was exclusively for boarders, two hundred and fifty of them, Collegiate had a lot of day girls and only about forty boarders. The Collegiate boarders were mainly the daughters of Midlands pastoralists and southern orchardists. Ruth was the exception. Her father didn't work for his living. She learned many years later that, while in her teens, she was called by some the heiress. This was because her father was a man of independent income: no farm, no profession, no job. It was unheard of in Tasmania.

Ruth arrived at the school frightened and homesick. She was frightened by the menacing colour of the sky. There had been bad bushfires that summer, something she had never experienced in England. In the same year she saw her first Aurora. She never had seen Aurora Borealis, in the northern hemisphere. The memory of both, the fierce colours, fascinating, but no longer frightening, is still with her.

It was strange, she found, to live in a boarding house that was right on a main street, with traffic passing by, and not in open country as St Felix had been.

After the first term she became happy at Collegiate, as she had been at St Felix. There was a lot at her new school to enjoy, but it also created new problems. On one of her first weekends at home, which was then at Glenorchy, she was gleefully telling her parents of experiences at school when suddenly her chatter was stopped and her enthusiasm dashed. Strong comments were made about her frightful accent. She didn't want to tell them anything else.

In the course of her English upbringing, accents were simply not accepted. She was made to have elocution lessons, but worse could have happened; the training enhanced her later pleasure in reciting.

Ruth missed the excellent teachers of St Felix, but some, like 'Charpie', made their impact. Such a one was Sister Phyllis, the headmistress of Collegiate when Ruth arrived there in 1917. She was a quiet woman of immense personal dignity and strong personality, said to have been born into an aristocratic English family before taking to the church. Ruth feels that this may well have been so, judging by her accent, behaviour and general demeanour.

As the years went by, Ruth became a bit self-important at Collegiate. Enjoying the absence of parental restraint, she became prone to pressing her point of view. On her birthday Sister Phyllis would say to her, "Good morning St Bartholomew!" and foretell for her a career in politics. (August 24th is the day of the Festival of St Bartholomew.)

Ruth had the good fortune not to be one of those whom she reduced to nothing with a sound dressing down in her quiet voice, but Alison Cameron, her former shipboard friend, was. She was so smitten with the music of a visiting pianist that she leapt onto the running board of his car as he drove from the Theatre Royal into the city. It was late at night and she had to find her way back to school, alone, while the others walked in crocodile.

Alison was a nice person, always bubbling over with life, but once again she was reduced to silence. She never told her school mates what was said to her by the daunting Sister Phyllis.

Isabella Dieudonnee Travers, 'Donny', who with Miss Morphett founded the Fahan School, was a student teacher at the time and started Ruth with Latin. In Ruth's opinion she was not a gifted teacher but a fine scholar and a superlative head because she too had that immense dignity and strength of character that made her a marvellous disciplinarian, able to avoid fuss and bother. She was of the same mould as Miss Silcox and Sister Phyllis.

She had a great influence on Ruth's life and Ruth liked her very much. While herself still a teacher, or librarian, at Fahan, after Donny's retirement, Ruth would visit her two or three times a year to have chats which they both enjoyed.

During one of those chats Ruth complained about the way so many girls simply wouldn't work hard enough.

Donny said to her, quietly: "I seem to remember somebody else who didn't work very hard."

Ruth remembered, too. At that time, at Collegiate, she had not worked all that hard. Girls never change!

Donny died in 1982 and Ruth misses her very much.

The deputy head mistress of Collegiate while Ruth was there was Sister Dora Beatrix. She was a lovely person Ruth recalls, but had a fiery temper. She was said to have had red hair before entering the sisterhood and having it cut off. Whether in a towering rage or being absolutely sweet, the girls liked and respected her, even when she was dosing them

tablespoons full of frothy yeast because it was good for them in the spring!

Sister Dora Beatrix demanded high standards in personal attitudes and conduct. She would give lessons on unselfishness, drawing on the blackboard, a huge letter 'I', representing the self. Then she would cross it out, and in so doing make the symbol of the cross, the sign of a godly life.

Less impressive, but likeable, was Sister Susan, nicknamed 'Snoo'. She was hopelessly inefficient. She was Irish and had done a six month nursing course in Dublin. Her knowledge of nursing, however, was 'nil'!

Once, while at home in St Helens on holidays during a time of drought, when the water supply was contaminated, Ruth drank water straight from the tap, against orders, and later at school became ill. Covered with boils and abjectedly miserable, Ruth suffered for a time under the ministrations of the rather incompetent school doctor and the absolutely incompetent Sister Susan. Fortunately, with the help of a friend, she was able to smuggle a letter past the school censorship system and get word to her mother.

Emily, who could be fearful on such occasions, went to the school immediately and packed Ruth off to the Heathorns Hotel - a good, comfortable family hotel in Liverpool Street not far from where the Railway Roundabout is now. There she fed her up on normal, solid, sustaining food. Ruth got well at once. The problem had been one of nutrition!

Another of the less impressive but memorable teachers was Sister Audrey. She had the misfortune to have a rather red face. It is not surprising, therefore, that she was known to the girls as 'Strawb.' or 'Strawberry'. She was a kindly person but inclined to get worried and angry, and had no conception of discipline at all.

While being taken for walks, when Ruth was about thirteen, the girls would get up to mischief. Some of the walks were to Fitzroy Gardens where there was a steep downward slope on one side of the path and a galvanised-iron piping fence for protection. The girls in front of the crocodile would grab hold of these pipes and do quick somersaults over them. While Strawberry stormed forward from her place at the back of the crocodile, the girls at the back would do the same thing! Ruth loved those walks in Fitzroy Gardens; she was good at somersaults and things like that!

Mary Corvan, or Corvy as she was affectionately known, was Ruth's music teacher at Collegiate, and later a family friend.

Corvy was a gifted pianist who had studied overseas. She wanted to go away for further study and development of her career, but her father, Canon Corvan, wouldn't back her. She always resented her father and said that both he and her brother, who was also a clergyman, were nothing but hypocrites. She believed that her father had only married her mother in order to have a good cook/housekeeper while he indulged his love of burying himself in his study, preparing sermons and reading.

Some years later, in the 1930's, Corvy had a special piano tuner. He was separated from his wife and refused to pay her alimony, preferring instead to go to gaol. So, for a few weeks every year, Corvy was without her piano tuner.

In 1974 Ruth visited members of her family on the mainland and before her return she was able to see Corvy at her home in Sydney. Corvy was then an old and sick woman with little more time to live, but they had a good talk and Ruth found her as bright in conversation as ever.

Ruth has always had a strong love of music. Her favourites are Bach and Beethoven, and she enjoys some of the more recent composers like Shostakovich and Mahler. She doesn't care much for Chopin. She finds him brilliant and beautiful but he doesn't move her. Brahms Hungarian dances, on the other hand move her to wanting to dance whenever she hears them. Once, early in her marriage while she was living in a cottage in New Town, Mary Corvan paid her a visit, and while there played the piano. The old teacher thought it quite natural that Ruth was impelled to dance to the music.

Ruth missed the playing fields and the splendid gymnasium of St Felix. They used the Hutchins School gymnasium. She recalls that she enjoyed the vaulting horse, but admits that she was rather timid in using it. She had to make herself overcome that fear.

She also played a great deal of tennis which she enjoyed enormously. She became known for her energy on the court and ability to recover hopeless balls, but she was an erratic player who did not win as often as she should have.

At that age, Ruth was incredibly agile and supple, and loved doing things athletic. She could lie on her stomach, raise her head, raise her feet and bend until her toes touched her nose, a skill she retained until after her first baby was born.

As a small child Ruth had been used to frequent changes of clothes, but at Collegiate the girls were allowed to change the thin pants worn in summer twice a week and thick winter ones only once a week. Cleanliness was maintained with a compulsory cold bath every morning at six o'clock. The bathrooms looked out on Mount Wellington, providing a picturesque view of the snow in winter.

How standards change! Ruth remembers advertisements in the Mercury, in the 1920's: 'Be a Change Daily Girl'. This was boosting the sales of undies.

There were no silk stockings, not unless they went in for the extravagance of real silk stockings at three guineas a pair! Hundreds of dollars in today's prices. With white shoes white stockings were worn, with brown shoes, brown stockings and black with black.

During winter the sisters wore under their robes long combinations. Ruth had worn the same sort of thing in England where the weather is colder but was laughed at when she wore them in Tasmania. The girls thought it terribly funny and giggled mercilessly when one of the sisters got her gown caught up and revealed her 'combies'.

They were not well fed at Collegiate. By and large the diet was sound but the cooking was indifferent. They had margarine instead of butter. Years later, the sisters were advised by the school's doctor, Dr Christine Walch, that they would have fewer colds among the girls if they gave them more butter. When she went home on holidays Ruth couldn't stop eating brown bread, thick with butter, for days. She craved it.

Young and always hungry, the girls were not all that fussy about what they were given, but Ruth loathed plain boiled rice, without milk, which they sometimes got for a pudding. As a meagre gesture to make it palatable a little jam would be added. It was forbidden to leave food, and she would often have to stay at the table long after the others had gone, forcing it down.

Ruth's early days in Collegiate were not always smooth. There was a fighting side to her nature. She slept in a four-bed room where the most senior girl happened to be a dreadful bully. Always hot tempered, and desperate at being picked on constantly, Ruth would retaliate, sometimes throwing things at her, usually books. One night she got so angry that she picked up her bedside chair and threw that at her!

Fortunately, the bully ducked and was scarcely hurt, but Ruth was in disgrace. She was forthwith put in a little room by herself. It was

commonly believed that this had something to do with the fact that her parents were wealthy and it was a privilege to have a room of ones own. In truth, it was not a privilege at all; she was sent there because she was a bad girl and not fit to be in a dormitory with other people.

She enjoyed the move, nevertheless, and believed that the bully was jealous of her good luck. That girl remained a bully until the arrival of a delightful girl called Helen Rex. Helen was used to coping with a bunch of brothers, and when the bully started badgering her, she knocked her flat!

That was not Ruth's only transgression while at Collegiate. On one occasion the girls were required to go to missionary church services every night for a week as well as the usual service on Sunday. Not at all happy with the expectation of something so boring, Ruth conspired with some of the other girls that she would stage a fainting fit and they would have to carry her out. It was decided that there would be a dress rehearsal at school. Ruth 'fainted' and a teacher was sent for. The teacher asked for a flower vase which Ruth knew to contain some rather ancient water. The plot ended abruptly as she dived out a window.

The story went around that she was going to faint so that she could be carried out by the choir boys of the Hutchins School. Such a thing had never crossed her mind.

While going to the cathedral in crocodile, the girls would sometimes see Doctor Lines, whom the Hodgsons knew. Upon seeing Ruth he would raise his top hat and bow. It made her feel quite adult!

The social attitudes developed in that school were basically the same as applied in England in the early twentieth century. Ruth was a product of that era of great industrial advancement in nineteenth century England which enriched many and impoverished many more. As one of the very privileged, she grew up with a sort of unconscious acceptance that this was a natural right and that servants and others of lesser status were somehow innately inferior. It was not a time when people from the lower walks of life, no matter how talented, could expect much in the way of opportunity to become acheivers in the sciences and professions.

This is not to suggest that well bred people would treat those beneath them with a lack of kindness, nor indeed, a lack of respect. This is illustrated by an incident in Tasmania which occurred sometime about 1920. Some Collegiate girls were soundly scolded because they deliberately omitted to say 'good morning' when they passed the school cook in the street. The cook complained to the principal and those

daughters of Midlands graziers were in trouble, not so much for being snobbish as for forgetting their duty as ladies. It was the duty of a gentlewoman to be courteous to everybody. The arrogant assumption that, through the accident of birth, they were essentially better remained unchallenged.

For some it was a struggle to keep their places in that developing ground of young ladies. At that time, there was a lot of hostility against things German. They had a girl at the school with a German surname. She was good looking, and fortunately, a nice person. Although born in Australia, she always had to make a special effort to be nice because her father was German.

For Ruth there were no real problems. She gained a lot of confidence at Collegiate, during her teenage years. She was away from home restrictions. She could be a personality in her own right, and stand up amongst her fellow students, succeeding in one thing and another. She might have succeeded far more had she not been getting tired.

In 1921, after four years at that school, Stanley took her away and kept her at home for a year. He had the intelligence and character to be able to see that she was growing too fast and needed to develop the body and rest the brain. There were plenty of books at home in St Helens to satisfy her needs.

The absence gave rise to a rumour. She was alarmed, upon returning to school in the following year, to learn that she had been very ill for a long time in St Helens Hospital.

When Ruth returned to school she did well with her studies, but that was her last year. She was taken from Collegiate before her matriculation year. She does not know why; she was not consulted. Sixteen year olds were not consulted in those days; they did as they were told and it was left to their parents to make the decisions.

Chapter 18

The Emerging Young Woman

In 1924, when Ruth was eighteen, the Hodgsons were visited by her Uncle Howard, who at the time, was travelling in his capacity as the representative of the Bradford, British and International Chambers of Commerce. One of the main problems he had to deal with in Australia was the branding of fleeces. Ruth recalls seeing for herself long lines of women in a factory picking flecks of stained wool off a finished piece of cloth, a considerable and unnecessary expense.

They toured most of Tasmania with Howard, and he loved it all. He was a kind uncle, but thought Ruth uncultured and lacking in 'English accent'. This was not true; her speech was like that of her father, which was good. Howard, on the other hand, had adopted mannerisms such making his A's sound like E's, e.g. 'cembra' instead of 'camera', with a hint of the strangled alto! He tried to make Ruth follow suit, but she stoically refused.

He tried to remedy the situation by urging her to return with him to England to be brought out under the aegis of a great aunt and be presented at court. Stanley was not keen but would have let her go. Ruth was not at all keen. All that dressing up and the ultimate agony of being presented at court; as a preparation for a kind of life that held no appeal? No indeed! Not for a girl absorbed in her books and natural history.

That is not to say that her life, as it was then, was in every way adequate. Fair Lea was a lovely place to live, but for a girl now growing into a young woman, there were gaps to fill.

These had been filled with dreams. As a teenager she had endlessly dreamed of romance. She was deeply in love with love. Beautiful romantic stories were conjured up in her mind, material for the most successful Mills and Boon novels had she ever put her thoughts on paper. As a senior girl at Collegiate one of her favourite authors was Florence Barclay

who wrote moving, soppy, but frightfully proper, love stories; the sort of thing that in later years she tried, but could no longer bear, to read.

She dreamed of love's ultimate consumation, having her own children. She dreamed of learning and making a career. But dreams are not enough for a person growing into an adult with her life to live, and there was no apparent sign that these things could be realised. She was anchored to the one way of life, without so much as a reasonable social life. She saw little of her old school friends, and for much of time met nobody but people of her parents' age group.

The Rev. Nicolas came to her rescue. Wasn't she tired of living a dilettente sort of life?

Yes, she was desperately tired of it!

She ought to matriculate, he suggested. He would coach her.

To this she agreed.

He had never been trained as a teacher but he was a fine teacher, nevertheless. His teaching was modern in that he abhorred repetitive memorising, and his results were excellent.

She did her mathematics by correspondence. Her cousin George and she sat the same examination. After the examination, he derided her for failing to give the same answers as his. Ruth got a credit and George got only a pass. To give George his due, he was very young at the time.

Mr Nicolas made her do Latin, because it was either that or French, and with French it would be the blind leading the blind. She had not been good at Latin at school, but he brought the subject to life. At the end of the year she got a credit, and when she went to university was awarded the prize for first year Latin, in 1928. Also in that year, she shared the Illustrated Tasmanian Mail prize for an essay on aviation.

Ruth was once delighted when a classmate at university was asked by the late Professor Dunbabin who his coach had been.

"The Reverend Nicolas at St Helens, sir."

"Ah! I might have known it. You have his stamp!"

Ruth hastened to inform Mr Nicolas. He always blushed when he was pleased and he blushed over that.

Another of his students, later be taught by Professor Dunbabin, was a farmer's son who would never have gone to university had it not been for Rev. Nicolas's influence.

One day, during a lesson, on his verandah, in the sun, a couple of Mormon missionaries came walking up his drive. He went to them to ask

them their business and they began to preach to him. He told that he was a minister of the Church of England and he didn't want anything to do with them. When they tried to say that it was all the same thing really, he told that it was nothing of the sort. "And what is more," he rapped at the spokesman, "I don't like the cut of your jib! Will you please go."

The two tall young men scuttled back down the drive with the fierce little clergyman glaring after them.

He was, nevertheless, a good humoured man and his wife was a particularly nice person who had cherished him through his long illness. Every morning as they worked she would bring their morning tea.

Ruth's gratitude to Rev. Nicolas is great. His had been one of the great influences on her life. He had awoken in her the awareness of something she really wanted: proper disciplined intellectual development. She still has the Oxford Book of English Verse which he gave her when her studies with him were finished.

It is inscribed:

'Ruth Hodgson
from Colin Nicolas
In memory of many pleasant hours 1926 - 1929'

Ruth matriculated in 1927 and went to University in 1928. During that year, at the wish of her parents, she studied extra-murally, lest she meet bad people and learn bad ways! She went to lectures in 1929 but there was a compromise. She was given the protection of being accommodated at her old school, Collegiate.

Stanley's nerve did not hold out long. Part way through 1929 he decided that they would go to England.

Ruth wonders to this day whether that decision, to go to England in the middle of her second year at university, might have had something to do with the possibility of her developing an undesirable association with some Hobart boy.

She had been sheltered by her parents to the point of absurdity and this, along with having been brought up in lonely places, left a mark which was to remain with her for the rest of her life. Hers had been a self-centred life, dependent upon ones self for occupation and entertainment. This had made her inward-looking and sensitive in an introspective way. Through this lack of involvement with other people

she was able to see them all the more clearly. An acute observer, she was too often made uneasy by what she saw.

She has never found relating to people easy. When she meets people, however, and gets to know them, she enjoys their company. It is the company of her children that she enjoys most. These have become the substitute brothers and sisters she never had as a child.

The people she did meet at that time, at the age of twenty two, were mostly of her parents' age group. This had its limitations; as was proper in those days she sat and listened while her elders were speaking, but in consequence, Ruth never really got along with young people of her own age, except at boarding school, and she was never at ease with young men. The men who appealed to her were always ten to fifteen years older than herself.

It wasn't until 1930, while in London, that an exception emerged. Her boyfriend there, who was about her own age, had the advantage of being a superb dancer and Ruth was passionately fond of dancing.

It was in that one respect that Ruth missed the association of men. She longed to have dance partners. Her father thought dancing to be immoral and that she was too serious minded for such frivolity. It had not occurred to him that he was in large part responsible for this. To be sure, she was naturally of a serious frame of mind, but the way he had brought her up made her more so.

Beyond the normal courtesies she had no association with men at university. She formed a couple of close and lasting friendships with women, however. One was Helen Dunbar, now Helen Cumpston. Another was Molly Fitzgerald, later to become her closest friend and confidant. Molly married one of their lecturers, Professor A. B. (Bert) Taylor. It was a sad loss when Molly died in 1986.

While lodging at Collegiate in her second year at university, Ruth made friends with Nancy Shaw, now Nancy Weaver, another student who was lodging there, also working as a part time teacher. They are good friends to this day. Nancy too, lived a life of isolation from men of her own age, but the prospect of a love life was very much in her heart. One evening while on their way to a lecture, she said: "This is the sort of night you'd like to be picked up, isn't it." This was quite unexpected; she was not a fast type. Nancy did eventually marry and become the mother of a daughter.

It was at that time that a young woman lecturer in mathematics was appointed. Her office was next to the professor's at the top of the old university building.

At Commemoration the students sang with glee:

How is life up in the attic?

Is it strictly mathematic,

Or platonic, or ecstatic?

This was a reflection of changing attitudes. Today we would expect it to be at least mildly ecstatic.

From the time she was quite young Ruth longed to love and to be loved. She valued the tenderness her parents showed for each other, despite their quarrels. What of families without that tenderness; does this leave their children without real family values; are parents to blame for their children's divorces? At the same time she dreamed of doing exciting things with her life: learning; making a career.

That was the dichotomy in Ruth's character: on the one side, the love of natural science and academic study; on the other, the love of life apassionato. The two don't mix, yet in her life there has been a fair measure of both.

Although an adult in years when she departed with her parents for England, Ruth was in essence still a child, still tied to her parents, submitting to their authority, and making no progress towards a life of her own. They could not have known, yet it seems hardly surprising considering her age and the influences to which she would be inevitably be exposed, that that trip to the other side of the world was to mark a turning point in her life.

PART TWO

WOMANHOOD

Chapter 1

Arriving in England

The voyage to England on the Port liner, *Port Fairy*, around the Cape of Good Hope took a long time, about seven weeks, because of the new diesel engines breaking down, but it was comfortable and pleasant. There were other passengers of about Ruth's age and plenty of deck games to play. The sports were so well organised that the twelve passengers never had a dull minute.

There was a piper in the crew. He would play in the evenings on the deck aft. People grumbled about him but Ruth found the sound of the pipes right for the sound of the sea, and the rigging, as it would be fitting for the emptiness and space of wild moors.

Stanley was a little hurt that Ruth should spend most of her time playing deck tennis and little with him. Emily rebuked her for it, and Ruth tried to explain that she needed companions around her own age.

It was not as though Stanley had nobody to keep him company. There were other men aboard, including a Western Australian station owner, a man called A. C. Russell whose wool was in the hold on its way to be sold in the United Kingdom. Mr Russell enjoyed the smell of his wool coming from the ventilators. While in England, Stanley was able to arrange for him to be shown over some of the family's textiles works.

Ruth found herself strongly attracted to the second mate, a Welshman with a fierce antipathy to England. He actually proposed to her! Fond though she was of him, she realised that she was not fond enough and turned him down at the last minute. Something told her that marriage with that man would not work.

Ruth was fascinated as they sailed into Dunkirk to see, in the early morning haze, a full-rigged ship sailing out. She was splendid, emerging from the golden haze, gradually showing herself with all sails set, magnificent compared with their own vessel which was almost grey. It was not until the tall ships arrived in Hobart for the Australian Bicentenary celebrations in 1988 that she was able to see one again.

Another memory of Dunkirk began with Stanley's yearning for a good omelet. He found a workman's cafe where the omelet they were given was magnificent. It was placed on a large dish in the middle of the table and they helped themselves.

Ruth was enchanted by Dunkirk; she had always wanted to visit foreign lands. A memento of that place which she had for many years was a little flask of perfume, Lily of the Valley, which she bought while there.

Hull, where they landed in England, was by contrast grey. They were met by Ruth's Uncle Malcolm who greeted them with the news that Britain had gone off the gold standard. They were suitably appalled.

Malcolm had come in his Bentley. Uncle Howard preferred a Rolls Royce, but Malcolm insisted that there was nothing so fine as a Bentley! Who should argue? It was beautiful car and he was a fine and enthusiastic driver. Rejected from military service in World War I because of mild tuberculosis, he had equipped himself with his own ambulance and gone off to France as a volunteer ambulance driver.

They went directly from Hull to Bradford to stay with Ruth's grandmother, Anne Hodgson.

Park House where Anne lived was not large by the standards of wealthy people of the time. There were three reception rooms and a cloak room downstairs, six bedrooms upstairs and maids quarters in a separate wing.

There was no butler or footman, and the staff were a cook, kitchen maid, parlourmaid and house/parlourmaid. A semi-invalid, Anne also had her personal servant, Alice. Alice was a wonderful person who began working for the family as a nursery maid at Nocton Hall, in 1891 when the youngest, Helen, was born. Later she was sent to Lincoln Hospital for six months to become trained as a nurse.

Alice was quiet and discreet. Ruth was rather frightened of her, fearing that she might be in for a scolding at any moment, but once as a child she was delighted when Stanley, then a man well into his thirties, came in out of the rain.

"Now Master Stanley," Alice said, as though he were still a little boy, "you get that wet coat off!"

For the greater part of the latter years of her life, Anne was bed-ridden and Alice nursed her competently throughout. It was a great loss to the family when Alice died, particularly Anne whom she pre-deceased.

Anne Hodgson was exacting in her standards. When she found a minute trace of of plate powder on a piece of silverware, she said, "Oh dear, I feel White's eyesight is not what it was. I shall have to dismiss her, but of course she will be pensioned."

Nothing would induce her to compromise in a matter of housekeeping, nor to neglect her responsibility to a loyal employee.

Her exacting standards and keen sense of justice were demonstrated in front of a family gathering one night when a niece, sitting on the floor doing some sewing, snipped off many little pieces of material and left them on the carpet.

"Ida, I hope you're going to pick those up?" Anne enquired.

It would be all right, Ida replied. White could do it in the morning.

White would not do it in the morning, Anne informed her. She would not have extra work made for her staff and Ida would pick them up at once!

Ida had no choice but to obey.

The taste for well-run houses (we call them homes in Australia; houses in England) was passed down to her children. Malcolm's house, for example, was always fully staffed. On one occasion, when it was necessary to economise, the tweeny was dismissed. Some time later Malcolm observed to his surprise that the tweeny was back. His wife explained that they couldn't do without her. They certainly lived in a big house which required a lot of looking after, but there were only four of them: Malcolm, his wife and their two sons.

In the 1930's, Howard rented a house called Broxholm, the dowager house at Ripon. It was almost as big as Tasmania's Government House and staffed by a hoard of servants. With the standards he maintained, they were needed. For example, there was a fireplace in every bedroom, and anybody staying there had a fire on cold nights. It was quite a house for a childless couple!

Ruth had bad tonsils when she arrived in England, and they were making her tired. When her cousin Christopher asked her to a dance she told him she would love to go out with him sometime, but later, when she didn't feel so tired. This put him off and he didn't ask her anywhere again. It didn't matter greatly; she was not attracted to him, probably because he was too young for her; only about eighteen months her senior!

By this time the longing to make something of her life, to be somebody, doing something in her own right, was affecting Ruth strongly.

This was no longer the dreaming and vague yearnings of somebody very young, but the reality of what she was, and what she wanted to do and be, emerging, painfully. She was often depressed.

One day while they were staying with her Uncle Malcolm near Scarborough, in Yorkshire, she was walking on the shore. It was a dull spring day and she was oppressed by feelings of loneliness and depression. The future, it seemed, held nothing: no career, no man in sight with whom she could fall in love. At the same time she sensed the immense loneliness of that place. It was like being in another world; a steely-grey world. Oddly, this did not add to her unhappiness; the world about her was in affinity with her mood.

Stanley, of course, was oblivious to those moods. He had become obsessed by a new prospect of glorious isolation! A tiny island called Brechou, off the island of Sark, in the Channel Islands, was up for sale. He thought seriously of buying it, and had he done so, would have been feudally bound to the Lady of Sark, even to the extent of providing her with men for her army, should the need arise!

Emily put paid to that and many another dream. Ruth is thankful that she was always there to keep them on an even keel.

Chapter 2

Journey to Canada

The family went to Canada in 1930. They crossed the Atlantic on the *Loch Monar*, a Royal Mail ship which carried a dozen passengers. It was a happy trip despite having struck an Atlantic storm when the ship was nearly empty of cargo. Not only did she roll quite frighteningly, but first one and then another of her deisel engines broke down.

During the night, while the engines were being repaired, Ruth joined her parents in their cabin. Stanley devised a means whereby they could get a little sleep without the danger of being thrown out of their bunks. He put a cabin trunk across the cabin, between the bunks on either side. On this he lay with his head and shoulders on one bunk and his feet reaching the other. Against his feet was a pillow, and wedged between the pillow and the bulkhead lay Emily and Ruth.

The next morning it was fearsome to see huge waves towering above them as the ship plunged into each trough, but by this time the engines had been repaired and the danger had passed.

During the voyage, while in the Carribean, Stanley and Ruth were taken down into the hold by the chief mate where they saw men sweeping up pickled onions that had broken out of their barrels. While climbing the ladder out of the hold, the chief mate went ahead, Ruth followed and Stanley came behind her. The ship was still moving about quite a bit. One moment she would be lying face down and the next, hanging in space. It was comforting to have her father's strong arms behind her.

The voyage took them through the Panama Canal. This was a wonderful experience. They lay in Colon for a day or so before entering the locks and while there enjoyed walks in the street. It was Ruth's first remembered experience of a place in the tropics. She loved it: the

cosmopolitan feel of the place, the smell, the tropical heat, the coloured people around her, the different languages.

Stanley had different feelings about coloured people. He preferred the company of whites, but being the man he was - romantic, affable, kindly - he was as charming to black people as he was to whites.

In the locks the ship was - as is still done today - hauled along by mechanical mules. Further fascinations were the proximity of the tops of drowned trees in the Gatun Lake, followed by the narrows, a long gulch-like passage called the Culebre Cutting.

To one side of the Culebre, Ruth was able to look down upon a leper colony enclosed by big wire fences. The Culebre was so narrow that if another ship approached in the opposite direction, one would have to tie up at the bank.

The ship refuelled at Balboa and they took a walk in the town at night. The atmosphere of the town with its proliferation of great black pipes and the strong smell of crude oil was all rather murky and mysterious. The scene was lightened somewhat by the decorative manner in which a long row of chamber pots had been arranged in the well-lit window at the front of a large store!

Out in the Pacific Ocean there was heavy swell and the ship rolled yet again. It was a different sort of roll from that in the Atlantic. It would roll to starboard, then start to come back again, dip a little, then roll back to port, start to come back the other way, dip again and then come back! Like doing little curtsies, first to the right then the left. Horrible! And no doubt a most unstable condition for a ship to be in.

The adventure ended with their safe arrival in Los Angeles. During a bus tour around Los Angeles, Ruth was sitting next to a petite Southern Californian girl of about her own age who was unable to tell what their guide was saying when he announced the statue of *Jainaik* (Joan of Arc). Her speech was gentle: his was broad and ill-pronounced.

They finally left their ship in Vancouver where they began their stay in Canada. Vancouver, they found to be a delightful place with beautiful gardens and a lovely entrance through the narrow strait to the harbour. The Hodgsons' enthusiasm was dulled a little by the central heating which they found excessive. Indoors people wore light clothing, but outdoors they were rugged up in furs. The incidence of pneumonia, they were informed, was high because of these extremes of temperature.

An intriguing feature of Vancouver was the Hudson Bay Trading Company, a huge department store selling all the necessities and luxuries of the world: anything from saucepans to fine jewels; from canvas tents to silken dresses. It was in sharp contrast to the Hudson Bay Trading stores Ruth had read about in many adventure stories, where they dealt in furs and were nothing more than log cabins.

At that time liquor could be purchased only from government stores. It was all of the best quality but a licence was needed to buy it. Ruth still has a licence issued to Stanley, dated February 1930. The province of British Columbia was profiting greatly from the effects of prohibition in the United States. Crowds came over at weekends, and the income from their liquor buying went largely to the upkeep of the roads in the province.

They crossed the bay to the city of Victoria on Vancouver Island where Ruth's widowed sister-in-law, Dorothy Hand, now lives. There they saw the Mounties looking very smart in their traditional red uniforms. They were reputed at the time to be a magnificent force. Dorothy's husband, Jack, whose career had been with the Quebec police, had once been attached to the Mounties for further training in crime detection.

By this time Ruth was twenty three, and the problem of being constantly tied to her parents was becoming oppressive. While on Vancouver Island, they were invited to visit some friends of Ruth's Aunt Annie. Ruth was eager to go; she wanted to meet other people. Stanley who had a bad cold couldn't go. Ruth phoned and arranged to go alone.

Stanley put on a sad act. Ruth was over twenty one and he could not prevent her from going if she wished, but he moped to show how sad he was, and how hurt he was. On that occasion Ruth didn't stand up for herself. She phoned and apologised, explaining that her father was so ill that she would have to stay with him. Instead of a visit to which she had looked forward, Ruth went for lonely walks and would sit in the parks, dejected and depressed.

The Hodgsons travelled east on a train of the Canadian Pacific Railway which Ruth remembers as having been incredibly long, with each carriage three times as long as most railway carriages in Australia. It was fascinating to watch that train snaking behind them, with an enormous drop on one side and timbered hills on the other.

They travelled in a drawing room. This consisted of two bunks which were turned into settees in the daytime, and for Ruth an elevated bunk,

with curtains to draw. It was awfully cramped but she slept well, nevertheless. The train was inclined to be gritty and it was not until a break in their journey in Montreal that they were able to have a good bath.

Ruth loved to go out to onto the observation platform at the back, but whenever she did she was warned by an attendant not to stay out more than two or three minutes, otherwise her face would become frostbitten.

Their departure from Vancouver was delayed by the silk train! Highly valuable silk was shipped into Vancouver from eastern countries and had priority over all else for transport across the North American continent. The passengers had to wait for the silk train to leave first.

When ascending the Rockies, not far from Mount Sir Donald, soon after dawn, the train was having an awful job getting up the gradients. Chf....chf.... *chf, chf, chf, chf!* Chf....chf.... *chf, chf, chf, chf!* More than once the passengers wondered whether they would make it. It was early spring and it was the first train since winter to go up with only one engine. When there was snow about there would be two engines, perhaps three. Fortunately they made it without having to send back for another.

Mount Sir Donald was splendid in the early morning sun, towering far above them, and so close, with rocky outcrops and great expanses of snow tipped pink in the glow of the sun.

The prairies were interesting but desolate, with the desolation accentuated at each railway station by huge grain silos, towering from the plains. They were told that the mental institutions in British Columbia were filled with people who had broken down under the strain of living in such conditions, through long winters in which they were virtually imprisoned by snow.

The train journey ended at St John, in New Brunswick, on the east coast. From there they sailed back to England on the *Duchess of Atholl*, a C.P.R. ship. In winter, ships sailed from St Johns, Newfoundland. Theirs was the first ship of the season to leave St John.

This was a pleasant trip, with good entertainment, and quite a number of people about Ruth's age.

Once again Stanley was hurt by Ruth's making a show of independence. One evening after dinner, when deck tennis had to be called off because of the weather, the group of young people decided to go down to the saloon and see if they could persuade a steward to give them

some supper. Down they went, three or four boys and three or four girls, and managed to get a steward to bring them coffee and sandwiches.

All of a sudden Stanley appeared, enquiring, for all to hear, when Ruth was going to bed. Dignity was at stake. She would go to bed when she had had her supper, she told him. Badly peeved, but unable to do anything about it, he took himself off. When she did go to her cabin he was waiting for her. He began to dress her down for going into dark places, like the saloon where there were only pilot lights, with people she didn't really know.

This was too much! Ruth turned on her father. He had brought her up extremely strictly, she reminded him, and she had turned twenty one. If, by that time, she couldn't behave as he had taught her to behave, either he had done a bad job or she was a hopeless case, and that was it! He had better leave her alone.

He went off in a huff, but returned a little later and apologised. Ruth was probably not the only person to scold him that night. Emily was more understanding in such matters.

Later Ruth has come to realise that her father relied on her quite heavily and that was why he wanted her to spend all her time with him. He needed her companionship because, intellectually, he had far more in common with her than with Emily. There was rapport between Emily and Stanley on a limited range of interests, but Emily had no interest in many of the things that absorbed him most of all, like wild-life and fascinating books.

There was never any question that Stanley was a kind man, and at heart a generous one. He never did things by halves. Almost immediately upon their arrival in England, while they were in Bradford, he saw to it that Ruth had a good outfit of clothes. Previously, he had been awfully sticky about clothes and now, to her delight, for the first time in her life, she had really nice things to wear.

It was only a palliative. Ruth was depressed by the way her life was going. The crisis came a short while later in London when Stanley announced that he wanted to go back to Tasmania.

Ruth was horrified. They had come thus far into the world, but she had had no real freedom; she had been under the eye of her parents all the time. It was not that she wanted to go wild, but she was a woman in her twenties and wanted to start being herself, living her own life, instead of doing only those things her father wanted to do. Emily and she

had wanted to go to a circus in London, but Stanley insisted upon something much more serious: Gilbert and Sullivan. Not too bad but not what Ruth wanted.

It was time to fight! Ruth staged a fit of hysterics! Stanley was astounded and didn't know what to do with her.

She told her parents that she wasn't going back to be caged in St Helens with no opportunity of any life of her own, a marriage or anything else.

Stanley capitulated; she was to stay on in England with her mother while he returned to Tasmania. He left them a generous amount of money and arranged for his cousin, Ruthie Harker, the daughter of Ruth's Great Aunt Nellie, to guide her into London life. He also gave Ruthie money so that she would not be out of pocket.

Ruthie's husband, Harold Harker, was once Recorder at Harrogate, an important legal position. He was also a profligate. His money was lost and their circumstances were sadly reduced. The marriage broke up and Harold's name was not mentioned.

Stanley returned to Tasmania on a Port Liner that had a huge gun turret as deck cargo. Emily was apprehensive about this, but Stanley thought it was funny. They need not have worried about him; he loved sea travel. As a young man he sailed to Tasmania on a New Zealand Steamship liner the *Papenui*. There he learned from an old sailor how to darn. He could darn invisibly, much better than Emily or Ruth could manage.

There was a humorous incident on the way to the ship at Tilbury Dock. They got the cab driver to take them into a narrow street where they could buy something Stanley wanted. They came upon a limousine driven by a 'superior' chauffeur having a great deal of trouble manoeuvring. Their cabby had them in tears of laughter and the chauffeur almost in tears of rage with his comical comments. The Cockneys have a gift for seeing the absurd and making the most of it.

They need not have worried that Stanley would be lonely, moreover. He had a splendid time upon his return to Tasmania without his family. Many an evening was given to entertaining his nephew George and his university friends. They had lots of dinners together and a great deal of fun. When Emily and Ruth arrived back in Tasmania all this stopped. Ruth felt a little resentful when she heard about it later. She would have liked

to share in that fun. By that time she knew what it was like to really have fun.

Chapter 3

The New Freedom

Ruthie Harker had a number of friends with sons and daughters in their teens and early twenties, and she would arrange for little groups of them to get together. From among them Ruth found a boyfriend, Tim. Not quite her cup of tea but she liked him and he was a marvellous dancer. That meant everything at the time; to be able to dance wherever they went.

It was about that time that the straight waltz came in: a one-step done in three time, in any direction you chose with all sorts of hesitations and turns; you just improvised. Marvellous for self-expression!

Tim was a good sort of friend to have in London. He knew his way around. As well as dancing there were lots of theatres, skating and fascinating places to visit: Hampton Court; the orchid house of Kew Gardens, hot, steamy and smelly, glorious in the evening; and to museums. He was quite knowledgeable about things in museums.

His mother would have liked them to marry, but Ruth never felt quite sure of him. He was just the current boyfriend; a few kisses but never intimate; gratification of the need for a male friend.

Although in the middle of the depression, it was a time of optimism. World War II had not yet appeared as a probability, and the young people of the time were enjoying the new freedom that World War I had given them. For Ruth it was a new freedom of a special kind.

The optimism was reflected in the popular songs of the time, such as *Keep Your Sunny Side Up* and *Singing In The Rain*. The former contained the words:

Never let yourself be blue,
Just direct your feet on the sunny side of the street.
Stand up on your legs,
Be like two fried eggs.
Keep your sunny side up!

Other song words Ruth remembers came from the show, *Follow Through*, with the two great comedians, Cicely Courtneidge and Jack Hulbert:

'Have a horseshoe upon your door
And maybe good luck will follow through.
Don't break any mirrors,
Beware of black cats too,
But cross your fingers and say hello,
And maybe your wish will come true!'

Love songs were not about broken hearts, but such things as 'Don't Be So Unkind Baby.'

Ruth once danced to *Singing In The Rain* with a member of the London Stock Exchange who was giving a birthday party for a daughter, in a night club. The lights were dimmed, with lighting effects to simulate rain. Ruth was sure he must hated the evening, surrounded by young people, and must have felt like weeping with the rain. But his wife supported him and helped to break down the generation gap. She was successful Old Vic actress.

A letter of introduction from a friend in Tasmania had Emily and Ruth in Oxford for Eights Week, when the great annual rowing contest between Cambridge and Oxford universities was held. Emily loved the countryside of Oxfordshire, but for all its beauty Ruth found herself unable to love it as she had the forbidding countryside of the Lake District where she had lived as a child.

It was in that year, 1930, that the Australian Test Cricket team toured England. Ruth watched them play in Oxfordshire and remembers seeing Don Bradman getting a mild rebuke from the umpire for doing something to the pitch he shouldn't have!

Ruth already had a Tasmanian driver's licence, but while in London decided to take up the Royal Automobile Club course in driving. She had a very monosyllabic instructor. He had a sense of humour, nevertheless. One day she was driving through traffic, doing quite well she thought, when she found herself behind a large truck. 'Mind that truck,' he said in his dead-pan manner. 'Dont you hit that!' She observed that the truck was laden with barrels of beer.

The driving instruction she had received from the Thompsons in St Helens had been good up to a point, but it lacked the professionalism and precision she got from her English instructor. Once, while backing and

filling in order to do a 'U' turn in a side street, she backed against the curb. "There's a thousand foot drop behind you, there!" he told her. "Do it again." It was a good lesson, and one she never forgot.

At one stage Ruthie Harker was in Ireland staying with friends in a country house near Skibbereen in the far south west. Tim's mother was there with her. Ruth and Tim were asked to go across and join them. They went by rail on the Irish Mail from London to Fishguard in Wales, then took a ferry to Rosslare in Wexford, south east Ireland.

On that ferry Ruth learned to combat sea-sickness by walking up and down and keeping her eyes glued to the tar seams on the deck. It worked. On all previous sea trips it had taken her about three days to get her sea legs, but that night she got them straight away.

After arriving in Ireland they hired a car in Cork. It was an A model Ford in poor repair. Every morning the engine head had to be taken off and mopped out. The brakes were not too good and the hand brake didn't work at all. Ruth had to do her share of the driving. It was a hair-raising experience but it probably increased her skills.

One day in Skibbereen, Ruth found that no matter what she tried the car wouldn't start. As is the way of the Irish, they gathered around, and like Australians, they have an embarrassing sense of humour. She was at loss to know what else she could try when a mild voice from the crowd said "Do you think you might turn on the petrol?" She did and the car started at once.

One of the fascinations of the roads in that part of the world were the posts that marked the ambushes during the 'troubles' of the twenties, when father shot son, and brother shot brother, in political arguments.

The house where they stayed was a long low bungalow with a lovely garden. At the end of the garden was a little stream with shallow rapids. Ruth used to go and bathe in this stream. There was a little old Irishman who lived there, or nearby, who looked like a leprechaun and played a pipe. When he played, Ruth would come out of the water and dance on the grass.

In their wanderings Ruth kissed the Blarney stone, but it didn't work for her. Whatever duplicity may have lurked in her nature, it would have been well and truly removed by the severity of her upbringing. In any event, it probably only works for the Irish, she feels, and they probably don't even have to kiss the blessed thing to become skilled in the art of flattery.

The south of Ireland reminded her very much of Tasmania, but with fewer trees, lovely but desolate in the far south west. They went almost to the far reaches of the Old Head of Kinsale not far from where the *Lusitania* sank in 1915.

Some of the party bought some home-spun tweed, and one of the boys had got enough for a small shawl. He persuaded Ruth to wash it for him. Fresh from London where the water was hard, Ruth used plenty of Lux flakes, but the water in Ireland came off the peat bogs and was as soft as soft could be. The suds rose, and they rose, and they rose! She could not cope. She almost panicked! She dumped suds into the lavatory and they rose there! Frightfully embarrassing in somebody else's house, but somebody told her not to mind; it was sure to be hygienic!

During that visit an old Irish woman who worked in the house and had known some of the party since they were children, expressed disbelief that the excellent teeth of one young man were his own. He insisted that they were, and before he realised what she about to do, she got hold of them and gave them a good tug.

"Faith and to goodness," she exclaimed, "and they *are* real!"

Ruth had a similar painful experience when the old woman yanked at her earrings.

The constant company of young people like herself, during that all too enjoyable six months, did Ruth good. "For goodness sake use some make-up," one would say. "You're so pale you're giving us all the miseries!" On another occasion: "It's no good being shy. Shyness is form of complete selfishness; you're thinking of yourself all the time."

Emily enjoyed her six months in London as well, and her attitude to Ruth was sensible. Ruth had complete freedom to do as she wished; either she knew how to behave and would do so, or she didn't and God bless her! If the worst had happened - it didn't of course - Emily would have supported her.

Emily was adamant, however, that they had to be back in Tasmania for Christmas with father. Ruth concurred. They could not leave him alone for Christmas.

Chapter 4

Charles Hand

Ruth was returning home to Tasmania with her mother on the P & O liner, R M S *Maloja*, in 1930, when she met Charles. In good humour, the Reverend Nicolas had warned her before her departure not to be foolish and fall in love with brass buttons on the voyage, but that is what happened. She fell in love with and, little more than six months later, married the ship's navigating officer.

Charles Henry Hand was born in Hong Kong in 1900, the son of John and Mary Ann Hand. Mary preferred to be called Marian and John, a heavily built man, was known as Jumbo. He was a Master Shipwright, employed in Hong Kong as the manager of the Aberdeen Dockyard. As befitted an Englishman living and working in the East, it was a well-paid position. They lived in quite a large house and had plenty of servants.

Jumbo's brother, Harry, and their father before them were also Master Shipwrights. Today, with grand titles all the vogue, men in their position would probably be called Naval Architects. To have been referred to as Naval Architects at that time would have caused those men great annoyance.

Ruth eldest son, Charles, has in his possession a document indicating that in 1869 Jumbo's father, also John, had been involved in the construction of two ships for the Royal Navy, *Thunderer* and *Devastation*. They were twin-screw, iron, armour-clad ships of 57/94 tons(unladen and laden weight). Their length between the perpendiculars was 285 feet, breadth for tonnage was 58 feet and the depth in the hold, from the top of the inner bottom to the upper side of the lower deck beams, was 18 feet. The estimated cost of building them was two hundred and thirty six thousand pounds.

Jumbo was a capable man at his work. He was a Lloyds surveyor after he left the East, a Lloyds surveyor in Chicago during World War I, and after the war, a steel tester. He gave the last certificate of seaworthiness to the famous clippership, *Cutty Sark*. When Ruth knew him he had

retired. Marian had been dead about four years when she first met him and he had married a second time.

Outside work, Jumbo was hopelessly absent-minded. One day, shortly before he was married, Charles met his father in the street in the town where he then lived in the south of Wales. Jumbo was carrying a dinner suit on his arm. Charles asked him where he was going, and Jumbo replied that he was going to the cleaners. Didn't he wrap his suit before he took it to the cleaners, Charles wanted to know.

"Bless my soul, I thought I had done!" Jumbo replied. There were more important things to think about than wrapping dinner suits to take to the cleaners.

Marian was a woman of strong character and firm disposition. The family returned from Hong Kong to England for a visit while Charles was still a small baby. One night on the voyage he was left in the charge of two young women who were to give him his bath. His mother chanced to look in to see that all was well and found to her horror that he had been left alone in quite a deep bath. The delinquent pair had gone off to look at a ship that had come into sight. What small enjoyment that gave them turned to misery when Marian caught them.

There is another story about Charles on that ship. He was crawling along the deck when he chanced upon a beer tankard a man had left beside his chair while he was talking. Charles quaffed all the beer that was in it!

While they were in England, Charles's younger brother, Jack, was born. Charles stayed with aunts in England while Jack went with his parents back to Hong Kong. Charles was evidently pleased to be rid of his younger brother. Upon hearing that Jack was going, he chanted, "Hurrah, hurray, Cabbage-face is going away!"

He was horribly over-indulged by those kindly aunts and looked every bit the fat, spoiled child, but the good in him was by no means lost. One day, while being rowed out to a ship by some men who seemed to be working terribly hard, he made a remark that bore unsuspected significance in relation to his later life. "One day," he told them, "I shall become a member of Parliament and see that you get proper wages."

The family returned to England when Jumbo suffered a decline in health. This was a great drop in fortune after the prosperity of Eastern life. They had to live sparingly according to the standards of the time.

Jumbo's income in England was about two hundred pounds a year. On this they managed to keep a good house, but they could afford only one maid.

Although originally from Cornwall, they lived in Northam in Devonshire. One of Charles's favourite memories of his life as a child was the cornish pasties his mother would make. They were symbolic of the thrift of the people who lived there. There is an old riddle: 'Why did the Devil never get to Cornwall?' The answer: 'Because the Cornish woman puts everything she can get hold of into a pasty!'

Years later, while they were living in England early in their marriage, Ruth and Charles visited Northam, and Ruth remembers seeing there the same row of buildings that had been the school houses of Kipling's *Stalky and Co.*

The children went to school as day students at the nearby Bideford Grammar. Charles was expected to work hard. If he didn't come top of his class in mathematics he got a spanking from his father. Fortunately, it was within his ability to do what his father expected and the fear of a bruised tail gave him the incentive to do his best.

Charles would have liked to study to become a doctor, but that was beyond his parents' means; he had to take whatever opportunity came his way. Befitting a family that had always been close to the sea, he won a scholarship to H M S *Worcester*, the training ship for navy cadets.

He was on the Worcester from the age of thirteen until he became a P. & O. cadet with first class certificates, at the age of fifteen. He was sent to sea, which effectively meant that his war service had begun at that youthful age.

His ship, S S *Poonah*, was torpedoed in the English Channel. They abandoned ship, but a skeleton crew returned to her when she didn't sink. Charles was one that skeleton crew, and had to stay aboard while the stricken ship was towed to port, stern first.

They were amused, when they returned to the ship, by the appearance of the ship's doctor, who was inebriated and furious that he hadn't been called. He had slept through it all, missing the call to abandon ship. For the rest of them, it was the one bright spot in the whole incident.

In 1916, upon reaching the mature age of sixteen, Charles was conscripted into the Navy. He became a Royal Naval Reserve 'snotty' (midshipman) on destroyers. He endured sailing in destroyers for only one year. During that time he suffered constantly with sea-sickness and was invalided out of them to big ships.

The big ships were not to be. He did a special course and went onto C. M. B.'s (coastal motor boats) instead.

This was highly dangerous, but to Charles a much more enjoyable life than destroyers. He didn't get sea sick, and there was the added advantage of extra pay: double hard-lying and double danger! One of the tasks of his boat was laying smoke screens at the famous naval engagement, the Zeebrugge raid in 1917.

Later, he was sunk by enemy aircraft in the Ems. After being some time in the icy North Sea water he was picked up and interned in Amsterdam. The good treatment that he and his friends received from the Dutch was not always well repaid, and when their behaviour became less than tolerable they were sent to Groningen where they were treated well, nevertheless.

When repatriated at the end of the war, he was found to be slightly shell shocked and was given extended leave to enable him to recover. At that time he still only eighteen, a war-worn veteran at the age when the war service of most men would have been about to begin! It was more than one so young should have had to endure. Like many young men caught up in war, he suffered for it later. He had an irregularity of the heart for most of his life.

In 1918 Charles was demobbed, and he returned to the P & O. He did well with his career, gaining his master's ticket for all tonnages at the age of twenty one. He was first on troop ships returning Australians to their own country at the end of the war. From that he worked his way up, and when Ruth met him he was Supernumerary Second Officer - the navigating officer - on the P. & O. liner, *Maloja*.

Chapter 5

One Enchanted Evening

The first impression Ruth made on Charles was not a good one. Through an oversight, Emily being unused to travelling without Stanley, they hadn't booked a seat at the dining table. They had to take the only two remaining, and one was at the head of the table. Emily absolutely refused to take that place, so Ruth had no choice but to be at the head of table. She remembered the lesson she had been taught in London about it being rude to show shyness, and made an effort to bright. The fact that her manner was somewhat artificial was observed by Charles.

"That is the type of woman I can't stand!" he remarked to a friend.

Ruth made a practice of sitting on the open upper deck in the cool breeze of the afternoons, sometimes accompanied by one man or another, older than herself. The deck was in front of the officers quarters and Charles, observing the other men talking to her, decided that he would too. He made her acquaintance and soon they were meeting there every evening, before he went on night watch.

They talked a great deal, particularly about poetry and books. In their discussions Charles revealed himself as a man of great sensitivity. He had been outwardly hardened by the rigours of his youth, but with Ruth he able to put aside his usual defensive and reserved exterior, and show himself as he was.

Poems he liked and would recite were:

'Harry Ploughman'

Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Hard as hurdle arms, with a broth of goldish flue
Breathed round; the rack of ribs; the scooped flank; lank
Rope-over thigh; knee nave; and barrelled shank -
Head and foot, shoulder and shank -

By a grey eye's heed steered well, one crew, fall to;
 Stand at stress. Each limb's barrowy brawn, his thew
 That onewhere curded, onewhere sucked or sank -

Soared or sank -,

Though as a beechbole firm, finds his, as at a roll call, rank
 And features, in flesh, what deed he each must do -

His sinew service where do.

He leans to it, Harry bends, look. Back, elbow, and liquid waist
 In him, all quail to the wallowing the plough: 's cheek crimsons;
 curls

Wag or crossbridle, in a wind lifted, windlaced -

See his wind-lilylocks-laced;

Churl's grace, too, child of Amans's strength. how it hangs or curls
 Them - broad in a bluff hide his frowning feet lashed; raced
 With, along them, cragiron under and cold furls -

"ith-a-fountain's shining shot furls.

and

'An anonymous carol of the 15th century'

I sing of a maiden

That is makeless;

(matchless)

King of all kings

To her son she ches.

(chose)

He came al so still

There his mother was,

As dew in April

That falleth on the grass.

He came al so still

To his mother's bour,

As dew in April

That falleth on the flour.

(flower)

He came a; so still

There his mother lay,

As dew in April
That falleth on the spray.

Mother and maiden
Was never none but she;
Well may such a lady
Goddes mother be.

There was a not so sweet side to his nature, Ruth soon found. Charles had a fiendish sense of humour and could be a merciless tease. On an earlier voyage he had become quite keen on a lovely young Moari woman. Unfortunately he teased her beyond endurance and she took up a knife and threatened to stab him! When Ruth learned about the incident she declared that she didn't blame the poor woman.

Charles was not Ruth's only suitor on that voyage. One was a particularly nice Eastern Telegraph man who was only going as far as Marseilles. They used to have long chats and might have become quite friendly had he been travelling further on that ship.

Another was a forestry officer who had been posted in India and had come aboard at Bombay. He was adamant that he wanted to marry her, and wrote for some time after disembarking. He didn't suit Ruth at all. He was too old and he had an awful manner with coloured servants. This clashed with the standards of her upbringing. Although prejudiced against colour, Stanley was kindness and courtesy itself to any coloured person who was serving him.

Yet another was an aircraft manufacturer. He gave her the clear impression that he would have liked to have seen more of her, but by then she had met Charles.

From the time Charles first spoke to her, Ruth found the attraction to him immense, and as they continued to meet, that attraction strengthened. This was a different feeling from anything she ever had before.

His first attempt to kiss her did not succeed. Ruth was so timid that she edged into a corner until the kiss became an impossibility. The shyness of the hunted female!

Later, as they sat at the bottom of the companionway leading to the bridge, before he went on watch, the kissing became welcome. It was

something Ruth hadn't experienced. She was happy beyond belief. At long last she felt complete; she had met a man she wanted to marry.

Charles, naturally for a man, was not so sure. He was concerned about the future. Like her mother, Ruth was quietly dressed. He had the impression that she was a not well-off nurse, and he had only his modest salary. She sensed that this was deterring him from proposing. Terrified of losing him, she gave him a vigorous psychological nudge, whereupon they became engaged.

At the end of the voyage Charles made it quite clear to her what a trying life for a woman it was, with the man at sea most of time; lonely and separated from her husband. Ruth had no fears; life would be hard, but she wanted, above all, to be Charles's wife.

Compared with this, her previous romances seemed rather trivial, but that is not to say that they were unimportant. In their time they had been both heart-rending and marvellous. When they ended it was like the end of the world, for at least a week, and in the more serious cases, perhaps a month, usually depending on when the next most absorbing interest emerged, and that could be anything: another boyfriend, travel, study. It had been a necessary trying-out of the man/woman relationship, the exploration of each others characters before a serious decision is made. Facets of character that might not have been otherwise apparent are shown up, and these might well be facets with which one cannot live. A seemingly artistic person, for example, might be found to be 'arty', merely affecting a love of art, lacking depth and perception.

In Charles she found the quality of character she wanted. He had a job that required intelligence, alertness and an ability to accept responsibility. Besides doing well with his career, he was strong and athletic, a keen boxer, yet finely sensitive to poetry.

These and other characteristics were not assessed and added up by Ruth in a calculating sort of way. They just seemed to make their impression upon her as she got to know him.

Charles later told her that he knew he had done right when, at the end of the voyage, she flung both her arms around his neck as they said goodbye. It was not one of the all too frequent incidents of young passengers playing games of love.

Ruth and Charles had known each other for three weeks, less than the duration of the voyage, when they became engaged. Emily had no idea of this until after they had disembarked in Melbourne. Ruth simply

informed her mother that she was going to marry the second mate. Emily was aghast! She thought this was frightful; she thought she had arrived home safely with her companion/chauffeur/housekeeper in her clutches for life.

Stanley, on the other hand was not at all displeased. For all his possessiveness, he approved of her engagement to Charles. It did not seem to matter to him that Ruth had known Charles only a short time. Stanley was a good judge of character.

In 1931, Ruth went back to university, this time for less than one term. It was not a success. When she told them she was going to leave to get married, she was sure they were glad to be rid of such a love-lorn scatterbrain!

More conflict between father and daughter emerged. Ruth was offered the lead in the university play that year. She loved acting and was thrilled, but father went into the mopes. He didn't say anything but made the others feel his moods. He would sit about in places like the entrance hall of Heathorns Hotel, leaning forward with his hands clasped between his knees, gazing sadly and pensively at the floor.

Ruth knew what he was saying: his heart was breaking because his daughter was going onto the stage, that step to everlasting damnation! Was he remembering his own young days when he and other lads like him had frequented the stage door and seduced, or were seduced by, girls out of the chorus.

To her later regret, Ruth gave way and turned the part down. It was a decision that did no good, either to her or to him.

During those months, Ruth had her own car. It was a little Chevrolet tourer with just enough room on the front seat for three people to sit comfortably, and a dicky seat at the back, which would take another two or three passengers or could be used for luggage. It could, in fact, carry nine people up Mount Stuart where Helen (Tubby) Dunbar lived. It was given to her by her father, and was the first car she had had of her own. She enjoyed it very much.

As well she might! Of the three or four hundred students at the university, she was one of two or three who had cars. Not many of the staff had them either. For most people those were difficult times. They were living at Ferntree on the slopes of Mount Wellington, and she had to be careful who she stopped for on the mountain road. It was common for

cars to be stopped, the driver bashed and his or her cash stolen. The cars were not stolen; it would have been too dangerous for the thief.

Knowing nothing about driving, Stanley had complete faith in Ruth. He once got her to drive him to a spot near St Columba Falls to see Bob McMichael who had worked for him at Fair Lea and had taken to tin prospecting. The road was in frightful disrepair. At one point, on a sharp bend, there was only enough road for two wheel tracks across a deep culvert, with something like an eight to ten foot drop underneath.

Ruth was quite discouraged, but Stanley was unperturbed and urged her keep going. This she did and eventually they found Bob. He had had influenza and was not at all well. He should have some medicine, Stanley decided. Back they went to St Helens, got the medicine and back to Bob's camp they went. By the time they got to St Helens again it was dusk and they had crossed that wretched two-track bridge no less than four times!

Ruth was once driving her parents on a trip up the East Coast, when at a place where the road looks down onto the sea, Stanley started singing. Ruth joined in. Emily became quite annoyed. She was nervous, perhaps.

Also, during that period, the family took a trip to the West Coast, accompanied by Tubby Dunbar. They were shown around the mine by an official on a non-visitors' day. It was before the mine became entirely open-cut, and they went into the pit. When it was time for them to surface it was not realised that there were visitors aboard the lift and it went up as it normally did for the miners, at great speed. In a couple of minutes they ascended fifteen hundred feet! In their kindness and mercy, the miners going off shift stood carefully between them and the gaps that served for doors.

The adventure did not end there. Tubby and Ruth were offered a lift down to Queenstown in the ore train. It was an incredible, almost vertical, descent, and they had to hang on for all they were worth, but they thoroughly enjoyed it.

They also went to Strahan on the Abt Railway. They were intrigued to observe that a little station somewhere along the line was called *Dubhil Barril*. Just as tourists do today, they took a boat trip from Strahan up the River Gordon. It must have been a great pleasure to Stanley to return to the wilderness he had loved so much as a young man.

It was trip full of fun, marred only by the cheerlessness of their Queenstown hotel. It catered badly for tourists. A bored commercial traveller tried to pick Tubby and Ruth up. They became extremely,

Victorianly, circumspect. He was told by Ruth that her fiance would not approve of her going out with strange men.

Three months passed before the *Maloja* returned to Hobart and Ruth and Charles saw each other again. They wanted to get married then, but that meant that it would have been a May wedding and Emily believed May weddings to be unlucky. Or was she trying to put it off? Stanley pointed out, more rationally, that he was a little short of money and it would be more convenient to put it off until his six-monthly income arrived.

For the two or three days the ship was in port, Charles stayed with the Hodgsons in a house called the Red House they were renting in Ferntree, on the slopes of Mount Wellington. Charles took a great liking to Stanley. They got along splendidly and he enjoyed his stay.

Stanley, with his devotion to Victorian morality, was incorrigible. In the evenings while Ruth and Charles sat spooning in one room, Stanley sat playing patience in another with an open door between them!

Chapter 6

Marriage

When Ruth next saw Charles, three months later, it was at the altar of Christ Church in Brunswick, Melbourne, where they were married. In over six months they had seen each for three weeks and a few days.

On the other hand they had written to each other constantly in the months they were apart, and through that correspondence they got to know a great deal about each other. Charles's letters were long, interesting and loving. Ruth had lived for them, oblivious of other people.

For Ruth, her wedding day, August 3, 1931, was something too big, too deep in its implications, for shallow excitement. Her bridesmaid, Sheila Parsons, remarked that she was the calmest bride she ever known. Oddly, of all the people who were there, she can remember only Sheila in the morning, her mother, her father and Charles, yet she knows that Charles's captain, Captain Browning, was there along with other ship's officers.

Charles arrived in Melbourne after a dreadful night of sailing from Adelaide through heavy fog. Time was short when they at last tied up. The officers and servants quarters were in a turmoil. He was whisked into the bathroom by his fellow officers who were rallying around helping him to get ready, and while there a woman journalist from Hobart arrived. She wanted to interview this young man who was going to marry the Tasmanian girl. The chief mate, a man with a wicked sense of humour called Charlie Chaplin, directed her to the first door on the right. In she bustled, first door on the right, and was confronted by Charles Henry Hand, stark naked under the shower. She got her interview, in due course.

As was the custom a huge garland to show that somebody aboard was getting married was hung at the ship's mast.

Christ Church was lovely: a little parish church, built of stone and the second oldest in Melbourne. With the bright morning sun pouring in onto the light-coloured walls of the interior, it was beautiful.

It was chosen because Ruth's former headmistress, Sister Phyllis, had in her kindness arranged everything for them in Melbourne through the sisters of her order who had their Melbourne headquarters in that parish. By coincidence, the vicar of that parish, the Reverend Walter Green who married them, was an ex-Tasmanian and had been a passenger on the *Maloja* when Emily and Ruth returned to Australia some six months earlier.

He was good to Charles. When he found him arriving all of a dither, he took him out to the tennis court at the back of the church and told him to jump the net! Charles jumped the net a few times and it settled his nerves.

Ruth did not marry in white, but this had nothing to do with whether she had been a good girl or not. She knew nothing of that convention; she simply understood that you married in street clothes or not in street clothes, and she thought street clothes more practical. She wore a creamy-fawn dress with a brown cloak which belonged to it, and these were useful to her for a long time after.

On the matter of an engagement ring, this streak of practicality was perhaps overdone. Charles was averse to buying one in Australia, preferring to get it in London where it would cost far less. Ruth suggested that by the time he had returned with it they would be getting married immediately, so why get an engagement ring at all? She would have her wedding ring and it seemed silly to have both. Charles agreed, but she later felt that she had been mistaken in making that decision.

She made the first blunder of her life with Charles only minutes after they were married. When a young reporter tried to take her photograph outside the church, she ducked into the car. Charles asked her why she did that, and Ruth replied that they didn't want a lot of publicity, as Stanley would have done!

It was depression time, the young man had his living to earn and she had deprived him of an opportunity, Charles pointed out. Ruth felt rather ashamed of herself. In her father's day you simply did what you thought correct, and the other man's point of view didn't necessarily matter.

On the previous evening, a reporter from Hobart had phoned them at the Windsor Hotel and asked Stanley if they wanted a 'puff' in the social 'par'. (a few words about the wedding in the social paragraph). With a suitable look of disdain, Stanley repeated these words to Ruth.

"Oh no, Father!" Ruth replied. "It is too ridiculous!"

Upon reflection, she realised that it would have been nice to have said some little thing to let all their friends in Hobart know. The really ridiculous thing, she now asserts, was that practice of pulling away from society at large because it was not what a lady or a gentleman did.

After the wedding Ruth and Charles went to their suite at the Windsor, and there they sat and talked. They were friends, and now they were together, so they talked and talked and talked! The others had difficulty in unearthing them for the wedding breakfast.

Charles had a wonderful time at the breakfast because Ruth was teetotal. She had been brought up that way, allowed only to drink cider which Stanley believed not to be alcoholic because he could drink it by the gallon without it affecting him! Whenever her glass of champagne was filled, Charles swapped glasses, so he did well! Like Stanley, he had a strong head and it didn't seem to affect him.

Their honeymoon, paid for by Stanley as a wedding present, was taken in stages. Almost immediately, Charles had to return to his ship and sail to Sydney. While the ship was in port he could remain ashore, but out of port, no matter how briefly, he had to be aboard. Captain Browning, was inclined to be panicky if he didn't have his pet navigator aboard.

It was not permitted for a member of the ships company to be accompanied by his wife while at sea, so Ruth followed by train to Sydney. All the way, she was either knitting or darning socks. Charles's socks were in the most atrocious condition! At sea, holey socks were either thrown away or given to the dhobi wallah and they would be machine-darned, with cotton!

While in Sydney they stayed first at the Wentworth Hotel, and later went to Leura, in the Blue Mountains for a few days. Ruth enjoyed that greatly: the dense bush and the magnificent views of the deep, tree-filled, valleys. It was spoiled just a little by the fact that they had to sleep in single beds!

One night while there, Ruth had a recurring nightmare: she was shut in a cave and couldn't get out! She woke up beating at the window. Charles hurried across to her and calmed her down.

"Sh, sh, sh! They'll think I'm murdering you!" he pleaded.

The next instalment of the honeymoon was in Brisbane, where they had a great deal of fun. Somebody in the company lent them a car, complete with driver, and they were able to look around. For the first time in her life Ruth realised that pineappples grow on plants like

cabbages, quite near the ground, not on beautiful palm trees, like coconuts.

While driving around one day, they saw some cattle and among them a cow with a bell on her neck. That were well before the days when Charles became an expert on matters of livestock and he asked Ruth why the cow had that. She thought it was silly question, so she gave him a silly answer, the first thing that came to her head. It had been ill, she explained and the weight was there to keep its head down and make her eat! Charles believed this and was quite annoyed when he found out sometime later that it was not true.

They returned to Sydney, she by train and he on his ship. There they were entertained by a wealthy woman, Mrs Bertie Pope, wife of the Managing Director of Farmers, the elite store of the time. The more popular, budgeting store was David Jones. Years later, at Hadleys Hotel in Hobart, Mrs Pope horrified a friend of Ruth and Charles, a farmer called Sammy Newman, by taking away his 'ordinary' after dinner brandy, pouring it on an aspidistra and replacing it with the brandy from her special bottle brought with her from Sydney. Only the best was good enough for her guests!

Mrs Pope took them for a weekend to Jenolan. They went into the caves but they were both claustrophobic and couldn't get out quickly enough. Captain Browning, who was with them, gloated because he had loved it! Ruth had a fear of heights as well, but she managed to cross the Carlotta Arch. Captain Browning tried to follow, but got part of the way across and panicked. He had to be helped back!

Not liking the arch, Ruth and Charles returned to the road by descending a steep, muddy track. It was so steep they had to sit and slide. Charles's grey slacks were bedaubed with mud, but on Ruth no mud could be seen. Her full-pleated skirt had fanned out behind her and the mud was on her pants underneath! To add to the day's fun, they met a frilled lizard while driving away. The car was stopped and Ruth, in her boundless love of wildlife, was able to take a good look at the fascinating creature.

While the ship was in port and there were no passengers aboard, Ruth was allowed to stay aboard either in Charles's cabin or in one of the empty suites. One morning she was woken by a noise and opened her eyes to see Charles's Muslim servant doing his best to fold some of her slithery, silk underwear. Unaware that she was watching, he gave a

woebegone shake of the head and hung it up instead, as he should have done in the first place.

Ruth had a pale green kimono and a green hat which Charles loathed. One morning, in an ironic mood, Charles put on the kimono and hat, and sat making a silly act in front of the mirror. In came the servant. He did not bat an eyelid; if Sahib wanted to dress up, he could dress up as he pleased.

On a later voyage, after their first child was born, Charles had a photograph of the baby in his cabin. For a time, the photo went missing. That servant had borrowed it so that it could do the rounds of the officers' cabins. He wanted to show everybody the Sahib's new baby. All the better that baby was a boy!

Charles had an empathy for those people. Some years earlier, while on station between India and China, one old Muslim asked if he wouldn't consider going ashore and becoming their doctor, their *Hakim*! That ship carried no doctor and Charles was in charge of the medicine chest. Charles refused, of course, but took it as a great compliment to have been asked.

Back to Melbourne for the next and last part of that fragmented honeymoon! Ruth was becoming upset. She was not pregnant, and feared she might never be. Charles, for his part, was miserable with a cold. They decided nevertheless to go to the theatre. All dressed up and ready to go, they sat in front of a radiator in their suite in the Hotel Windsor. They fell asleep and when they woke it was too late to go out. They had a good laugh and stayed in.

Ruth's marriage worked. She is a great believer in 'One Enchanted Evening': you see each other across a room and the ESP says this is it. Electrical emanations from every cell in the body are given and received. From that instant, there is rapport.

There is probably no stronger confirmation of her feeling that they belonged to each other than her belief that he was the only man she could have gone to bed with before she was married, but their marriage meant too much to them both for that to happen and they waited.

Emily and Stanley had discouraged one and then another of Ruth's ambitions: to be a doctor or, failing that, a nurse. They wanted to keep her at home as their companion. Emily felt so strongly about this that on the eve of the day that Ruth was to go to Melbourne to be married she sat on her bed and begged her to break it off. Her father would be so lonely!

Ruth was furious. She told her mother plainly that she had her own life to live and she was not going to take over her daughter's as well. Ruth was not going to be their paid companion/ chauffeur/ housekeeper with no life of her own. There would have been no respite whatsoever. Any show of independence, even the suggestion that she would want to go away for a holiday, would have been met with pleas of inconvenience.

Emily never liked Charles. He had taken her daughter away from her. That she might have forgiven him had he been a conventional, nine to five type, entrenched in a conventional suburban existence, but Charles was not that type, and Emily was very conventional.

Ruth loved her parents, nevertheless, and was so close to them that to have broken away as she did, might well have been impossible had there not been the pull of something stronger. She loved Charles and was determined to marry him.

Chapter 7

Home in England

Four months after her marriage, while Charles was at sea, Ruth sailed to England on the Orient liner, *Orama*. She was treated marvellously. The company gave her a cut fare and the officers were charming and kind. The purser, what was more, put her in splendid bridge four. The other three, all elderly gentlemen, were excellent players. They made much of her and taught her a lot about the game. They had some jolly good games, in fact, and Ruth did not let her partner down in the ship's competitions.

Ruth had taken the cheapest available first class fare, but when she arrived aboard she was told not to unpack. As soon as the ship sailed she was shifted up into a stateroom. It was depression time, 1931, and the ship was not full.

During the voyage, Ruth confided her distress at not being pregnant to a fellow passenger, a Mrs Maxwell who was travelling with her husband, a solicitor. That woman told her not to worry; it would become a habit before she knew what was happening! Many years later Ruth was able to convey to her, through her son Robert who is also a solicitor, just how much of a habit it became.

On that voyage she met a British member of parliament who boasted that he was England's youngest parliamentarian. He was a bumptious, displeasing type, she found. He told a group of his fellow passengers, with great pride, of an occasion when he told a rather zealous Labour member, who had declared his 'heart to be bleedin' over a social injustice, that he should 'let his bleedin' heart be governed by 'is bleedin' head'. Ruth thought it contemptable that a man who claimed to be educated could sling off at others. She and other passengers avoided him.

Ruth probably felt sympathy with that Labour man because she had never been one to let 'er heart be governed by 'er head. She had never done anything serious, like getting married, with intellectual consideration. It had always been a gamble. She didn't realise she was gambling and being impulsive; she was simply acting on a feeling within

herself that what she did was right. Little wonder she was impetuous: Emily was like that and so was Stanley.

Charles was given a whole voyage off, and while finding and furnishing a home, they boarded in a house in Peaslake, near Guildford, in Surrey. There was an early confrontation with the landlady. After a busy day's shopping in London and Kingston-Upon-Thames, they arrived home to a dinner of little cheese entremets, about enough for a midday snack. Charles was big man with a hearty appetite and Ruth was used to good solid meals. As the landlady soon discovered, they were not pleased.

They found a nice house in Peaslake: two storey, a good staircase, three bedrooms, bathroom, diningroom, sitting room, and a kitchen with the usual offices of pantry and larder. There was a large garden, and just across a lane at the bottom of the garden was a wood.

It was a beautiful wood but not to be explored. At the time there was Home office warning of a homicidal maniac at large in that part of England. People were warned to keep away from lonely places like woods. This was frightening for Ruth who was much of the time alone.

Another Home Office warning, one that made a lasting impact on Ruth, was about shutting children in rooms. Two children had been left in a flat. Mother, then Father had slammed out after a row. He thought she would go back. She thought he would stay there. The children could not reach the door knob and they died. Ruth will not have door knobs in her house beyond the reach of a small child.

It was a great joy to Ruth to have her own home at last, in which she could do as she pleased, and she had a marvellous time with Charles in London, buying furniture and other things for their home. She bought green carpets and curtains for the dining room to harmonise with the wooded area it faced. They had, in addition, cutlery, some linen and books from Tasmania.

Late in 1931, they visited Ruth's grandmother Anne Hodgson, in Bradford. Ever one to put character above superficial considerations such as wealth and position, Anne approved strongly of Charles. She made him a present of some history books, which was a great compliment from that old lady who treasured her possessions.

At all times, the good order of her house had to be maintained. Stanley, then in his fifties, could be scolded along with anybody else who stepped out of line. It happened when Ruth and he stayed out late playing bridge. It made no difference that one of the players was Anne's

own sister, Nellie Bottomley, and another was Nellie's daughter. Upon arriving home, they crept upstairs so as not to disturb anyone, but a voice from Anne's room said "I can hear you!" That meant that in the morning they would be spoken to for being out so late.

To Ruth's great joy she was pregnant. She went to a Dr Lankester who sent her on to his cousin, another Dr Lankester. That Dr Lankester put her on a diet allowing red meat only once a week; six days rigid and severe, and whatever she liked on the seventh. It suited her well.

She was affected by morning sickness, nevertheless. One morning, after morning cocoa with Charles in his club, she was sick all over the landing while ascending the stairs. Charles was not disgraced. The stewards who came to the rescue were probably all married and knew about such things.

Charles had other occasion to be disconcerted. As is common with pregnancy, Ruth became constipated. He would try to help her by massaging her tummy in the right direction. He could feel a sort of solid mass inside her that would stay put! It was some time before he realised that it was the baby's head.

Neither Ruth nor Charles were amused when, on All Fools day, Ruth answered the door after dark to find a hideous apparition at the door. It was part of the usual celebrations, but her scream brought Charles to the door with some comments about scaring pregnant women. A sobering experience for the reveller!

Stanley and Emily, in the meantime, had gone back to Tasmania, but it was not long before they returned to England.

They arrived in England shortly before the baby was born. Emily was afraid that Ruth would not survive childbirth and wanted to see her daughter again before she died. She had had a hard time herself during childbirth, and Ruth as a new-born baby had had minor ailments. Unable to believe that she had grown up tough, Emily imagined some inborn frailty in her child.

Stanley and Ruth had been shopping one day, at Harrods, buying lovely things for the unborn baby. They spent a lot of money and when they returned, Emily asked if they were wise. "What if....?"

"Now Mother!" Stanley interrupted. Both Ruth and he knew what she meant. It was her fear that Ruth would not come through childbirth, and being so practical, it concerned her that they spent so much money. Fortunately, Ruth and Stanley were able to see the funny side of it.

Ruth had occasion to regret that, except for cider, she was still teetotal. There was a discussion between Stanley and Charles about beer. Stanley illustrated a point by buying a niner of XXXX Double Berkshire brew. It was the colour of treacle and smelled delicious. Perhaps it was for the best that she didn't imbibe; it would have been heady stuff for a pregnant woman!

Pregnancy was a time of contentment and happiness for Ruth. She was became absorbed in herself and the unborn child.

In her own summation:

'For the woman who can produce a baby without complications, who is physically and emotionally equipped for the task, it is a time of peculiar joy, a tremendous thrill to be aware of the new life inside her. There is a delight with the swelling tummy and intense fondness for the little creature. If she were a cat she would purr and purr and purr!'

It was not at all difficult to go on with her normal life, Ruth found, not until she had trouble reaching the saucepans in the cupboard under the sink.

Emily's fear, of course, was ill-founded. Both mother and baby were in fine shape when the baby arrived. Ruth had been working in the garden on the long summer's night, and when she went to bed at about ten o'clock she found herself experiencing vague pains. She was taken to London at about four o'clock in the morning, in the middle of a thunderstorm. One wonders what Emily, who was terrified of thunderstorms, must have thought of that!

Charles Stanley was born on August 12, 1932, a lively, healthy baby weighing six and a quarter pounds. Somebody sent her a telegram congratulating her on the little grouse! It was the day of the opening of the grouse shooting season.

It was a wonderful moment. Dr Lankester had taught her to have her babies without anaesthetic, for which she eternally grateful. She was able to enjoy her baby the moment it was born. That dear, warm, squalling, damp little creature was in her arms displaying its character from the very beginning of its life.

The pain of childbirth, Ruth found, was of no account. It was intermittent, awful for a minute or two but no worse than if she had eaten too many greengages and had a stomachache. There is a sense of

creating something, unlike the pains associated with injury or illness that go on and on, all to no good purpose.

Ruth sympathises with those women who want their husbands with them during the birth. She always wanted Charles but it wasn't done in those days. Provided he is a man she really loves, Ruth discovered, it is a time when a woman feels tremendously close to her husband. There is both a sense of closeness and of combined creation. To Ruth, this is one of the great joys of being a woman.

Charles doted on his first-born son and would take it for walks in its pram. He would push the pram up a little slope in the garden, then let it run back. He did this one day in the middle of winter when the ground was covered with snow. There was a great deal of chuckling and laughter when the pram tipped over and baby went out onto the snow. Nobody minded, least of all the baby. They were like two children playing together.

Ruth was reminded of the incident some years later when her first daughter, Mary Ruth, was a baby. She found Charles in the sitting room decorating Mary's head with a little cardboard sweet basket. He put it on her upside down. "There darling," he said, "that's the sort of hat I'll buy for you when you're grown up!"

The pram, purchased at Harrods, was magnificent. It failed to survive the rigours of serving a family of nine, but it is worth remembering. The body of it was suspended between two great steel springs and in no way rigidly fixed to the wheel chassis. This gave a beautifully smooth ride, swaying but no jolting or bumping. There was a sort of false floor inside. This could be left intact, providing baby with a shallow bed to lie in, or one or more of three sections could be removed so that the child could sit up.

The false floor was useful when babies became bigger and bouncier. With the pram so good for swaying about, there was a risk of an active baby tipping itself out. Ruth overcame the problem by putting a heavy metal object under the false floor.

Not long after the birth, they had a visit from Jumbo and his second wife, Amy. They were expected, but Ruth had no idea of the time they would arrive. When at last they arrived she apologised if the dinner was a little over-cooked and explained that she had not been sure when to expect them. Jumbo asked her if she had received his letter. When Ruth

said she hadn't, his wife asked him if he had posted it. He found it one of his pockets.

"Oh! Bless my soul, it's still here!" he exclaimed.

That was Jumbo to a 'T'; ever absent minded.

Stanley and Jumbo became the best of friends. They would go to the local pub for their 'elevenses': a few beers and long chats. Jumbo would say how impressed he was by Mr Hodgson; he was such a fine businessman. That was the last thing that could have been said of Stanley; he wasn't a businessman's bootlace. He had a fine brain, but not for business.

Stanley would say that he admired Jumbo tremendously; he was such a practical man. It was only partly true; Jumbo was good at his work, but at most other times he lived in a daydream.

Jumbo liked a game of cards. When he asked Ruth if she would like a game with him, she replied that she had given up cards because Charles didn't really approve. Jumbo was not impressed. He told her it was none of Charles's business what she did.

The major naval engagement in which Charles had participated, the Zeebrugge Raid, was celebrated each year with a Zeebrugge reunion dinner, but it was not until 1932 that he was able to attend his first of these. He had always been away from home in the other years.

It was apparent next day that he had entered fully into the spirit of the solemn occasion. He was very quiet and asked Ruth to delay dinner until the evening. This she did and, she is pleased to recall, the dinner was a great success. It was not until much later that she realised that it was the first dinner she had given him when he had a most fearful hangover. He ate it and enjoyed it, nevertheless, and thanked her for preparing it so well.

Charles never liked making a fool of himself. He had rueful memories of having, at that reunion, instructed an Admiral of the Fleet on how to sail into one of the major harbours of Algeria.

For all the liveliness of the evening, Charles had arrived home before midnight. Ruth was not sure that it was he at the locked door, and she was nervous at being in the house alone. She had a hatchet in her hand when she met him! Her plea that she had no way of knowing that it was not an intruder was of no avail. Charles made a fine story out of it. For years to come he would tell his friends how she had greeted him in a furious temper with an axe in her hand!

It was at Christmas 1932 that Ruth, still an inexperienced house-keeper, received a lesson in resourcefulness from her father. She was cleaning up after dinner and having a battle with a greasy boiler. Stanley went outside and got some earth from the garden. Using this, they quickly got rid of the grease!

Peaslake was a nice place to live. There were lots of lovely walks in and around the town. The three of them would go together, the baby in the pram which was most suitable for walking on the Merrow downs.

Life was wonderfully convenient. Everything was delivered. Ruth never went shopping for her day to day needs. They had no telephone; next week's order was given to the man when he called with the last week's order. The fishmonger would come around with all the beautiful fishes of the North Sea. Nobody who has not eaten the cod steaks of the North Sea, Ruth declares, has ever really experienced a treat.

Because it was much cheaper than the local meat, Ruth always bought the frozen meat imported from Australia. On one occasion, when her Aunt Annie was visiting them, they had lamb for dinner. It was delicious, and Annie wanted to know where she had got it. When told that it was frozen, imported, Australian, she exclaimed in disbelief. That was dreadful stuff, so tough! This couldn't be Australian!

Ruth said that it was and told her what her excellent butcher had taught her about dealing with it. The trick was to de-frost very, very slowly. Deep freezing was not understood then as it is today.

For part of the time that they lived at Peaslake Charles was at sea. When he was away they would write regularly and, as always, his letters were loving and full of detail about what he was doing.

One contained a story about his meeting a mouse in the ship's pantry, no doubt doing as he was, looking for something to eat. It was a very small mouse. Instead of trying to kill it, he spoke gentle words to it and tried to coax it into his hand, but it was a shy mouse and hid behind a switch box. When he was a little boy, he added, he thought all mice were lady rats!

Guilford, nearby, was an interesting town and shopping there was a pleasure. There was a beautiful antique shop where Ruth and Charles bought a lot of their furniture. In that time of depression things were cheap. A mahogany drop-side table, then about two hundred and fifty years old, cost them a mere twenty pounds! A genuine reproduction

Chippendale carver's chair, bought at Maples in London, cost them five pounds.

Another fine place for newlyweds to shop, where all the basic needs for setting up a home could be found, was Kingston-Upon-Thames. Otherwise they went into London. They bought a huge double bed at Maples. Being depression time, they had no difficulty in getting them to lengthen the bars so that they had a bed seven feet six inches long and six feet wide. In all the time he was at sea, Charles, who was six foot two, had never had a bunk more than six feet long. Ruth was determined that while he was at home he should be able to stretch out and sleep in comfort.

That bed had a hair mattress on top of a box mattress, and when they were leaving to come to Australia, the packers cut the box mattress in two and gave it a hinge, so that it could be conveniently packed. Ingenious!

It was the price of being a sailor's wife that for much of the time Charles was not at home, but a couple of times before her baby was born Ruth stayed with him for a few days on the ship, while it was in port. On one of those occasions when Ruth was going aboard to meet her husband, she was accompanied by her parents. They were met on the deck by a distinguished-looking elderly gentleman. He and Stanley rushed towards each other with the warmest of greetings and demands to know where each other had been all these years. When they had been speaking to each other for about three minutes they realised that they didn't know each other at all; each was awfully like somebody else they knew. The coincidence of them both being mistaken was quite funny, and perhaps a little sad. Though they were not friends, one feels that two such gentlemen ought to have been.

Stanley set about persuading Charles to leave the sea and come to Tasmania and take up farming. He could see that the man being at sea for months on end was no set-up for a family. Ruth was never consulted on the matter, and for that she was grateful; she would have hated to have influenced her husband in a way that could have resulted in his unhappiness.

It was agreed. Charles had his last voyage as a P & O officer in 1932, and the five, Stanley, Emily, Charles, Ruth and the baby Charles, sailed for Tasmania on the P & O branch liner, *Moldavia*

When their furniture was packed and on its way, Ruth and Charles moved to a private hotel in Guildford. It had once been somebody's palatial house, extremely comfortable and well appointed.

One of the residents was a naval officer's widow called Mrs Prendergast! She believed in ghosts and had many convincing stories of ghostly experiences to tell. One night, after listening to numerous of the old lady's extraordinary stories, Ruth and Charles went upstairs to their room, and while getting undressed heard a harsh squeak behind them. Well conditioned to thoughts of the supernatural, they spun around in alarm. The wardrobe door had swung open!

The *Moldavia* was a comfortable ship, and fortunately had a good doctor. Ruth, who was pregnant with John, became ill. It was difficult to find something suitable to drink. She had to avoid alcohol and could not drink a lot of cordial. The tea, made with water boiled over and over in great boilers, was virtually undrinkable. Even plain water aboard ship was not at all nice. In consequence she was not getting enough fluid and got kidney trouble. She had to be put in the ship's hospital.

On arrival in Melbourne Ruth and Charles disembarked and crossed the Bass Strait by ferry. Emily and Stanley, in the meantime, stayed aboard, sailing to Hobart via Sydney, and taking baby Charles with them in order to give Ruth a rest.

It was kind of Ruth's parents to do that, and all might have been well had it not been for a rough crossing. Their ship, the *Loongana*, corkscrewed so vigorously that Charles, the master mariner, came close to being seasick. Ruth, despite her recent illness, fared somewhat better.

When Emily and Stanley arrived on the *Moldavia*, Ruth and Charles went aboard to greet them and the baby. Little Charles was presented to them resplendent on a cushion in a wardrobe, a great, fat suet dumpling! They had fed him and fed him and fed him, believing it was the right thing to do. It took Ruth and a highly trained mothercraft nurse months to get the child's digestion back into shape.

Chapter 8

A New Life in Tasmania

For Charles, starting a new career in a new country was difficult to the extreme. The dignity and authority of a deck officer on a big passenger liner, was gone. He was sent to jackeroo for a Mr Parsons, on a large Derwent Valley property called Bloomfield. His past achievements meant nothing in that new environment, and for the greater part he was not even credited with having reasonable intelligence, much less the aptitude to become farmer. His employer once told him that he would never make a farmer. He was used for his labour and not taught a great deal.

Charles met adversity with determination. He met the challenge of learning to farm where others would have failed. One of his early jobs was to harness the bullocks. He hadn't the faintest idea what to do. Fortunately, the old bullocky on the property saw the new hand's difficulty and was kind to him. He taught him to harness and handle bullocks. In consequence, Charles was always good with them. He liked them and never swore at them. It was not necessary, he would insist; they would follow the whip and they knew the words of command.

This new career into which Charles had been pitched, might have been impossible had it not been for his empathy for animals.

While at Peaslake, Charles had gone to a riding school, much to Emily's disgust! She thought only big land owners rode around on horses. She did not understand that Australian farmers had to ride in the course of their work.

It was fortunate that he had taken those lessons and knew to test the girth before mounting. The farmer's sons at Bloomfield had given him a horse with a slack girth. It was a lively horse and Charles was not amused by the joke.

During this time, Ruth and Charles had a flat at Aberfeldy, in Davey Street, Hobart, and it was then that Ruth became close to her friend, Molly

Taylor. They were both pregnant, each with a son-to-be called John, and they would take walks in Fitzroy Gardens, near where Molly lived at the time in Fitzroy Place.

Ruth describes Molly as the most unselfish woman she ever knew, a superb listener and entirely discreet. She would never gossip. As the years went by they were able to turn to each other with their troubles, and each knew how to turn the mind of the other to happier things.

Molly's husband, Bert, who was Professor of English at the University of Tasmania for many years, was also a good friend. It was fortunate that Molly was such a good listener because he was given to delivering 'informal lectures'. This could have been worse; Ruth found him most interesting when propounding on a subject he knew well.

John Henry was born at the Queen Alexandra Hospital, Hobart on November 16, 1933. For Ruth, the birth was not the joyous experience of her first. Disregarding her express wish, her obstetrician gave her an anaesthetic. The hospital, moreover, had restrained her from having her baby before the doctor arrived. She had nothing more to do with either doctor or hospital again, and never again did she have a baby under anaesthetic.

While still in hospital, about to go home, Ruth had a strange experience. While alone in the ward, she felt a sudden sharp pain, for which there seemed no reason. Then everything stopped. Even the garden outside became silent and still. She was wondering if the end had come when suddenly life resumed. The birds in the garden were flying about, singing again.

By this time they were renting a cottage in New Town, and when she returned home Ruth was attended by a capable mothercraft nurse, Sister Griffin. Emily disliked Sister Griffin intensely because she was a strong-minded woman and wouldn't let her do as she liked with baby Charles, whom Emily adored. It was not a good time for Emily; she had been making no secret of her anger with Ruth for having another baby so soon.

A few months later, in 1934, financed by Stanley, Ruth and Charles bought their first farm, The Nutshell in Mangalore. With only the meagre training of Bloomfield behind him, and its many discouragements, Charles entered into farming.

Nevertheless, he learned quickly, picking up many of the skills: ploughing, building haystacks, whatever there was to do. It gave him great satisfaction years later when one of the Parsons family was referred

to him for advice on a matter concerning Illawarra Shorthorn cattle which he bred and knew well.

Chapter 9

The Nutshell

Ruth and Charles were happy at the Nutshell, living in a good house overlooking the valley, close to the hills, well back from the Midlands Highway. It was not all that good a property from which to make a living, but it was all right for a start. There was an orchard which Ruth liked; there many sorts of fruit.

They stayed for a time in their small house in New Town while the Nutshell house was being renovated. It had previously been owned by an old couple who had let it become run-down. It was a good house, nevertheless, with dining room, sitting room, office, kitchen, bathroom, a large bedroom downstairs, and three large bedrooms, each with dormer windows, upstairs.

Stanley observed at once that there was no hot water service. That was not good enough by his standards. He bought one for them and paid to have it installed. It was situated behind the stove. In those days of wood stoves, it was necessary to have the fire burning constantly, and it was that fire that heated the water.

There were no refrigerators then, but the food kept well in a Coolgardie safe. Meat was kept fresh by covering it in a hessian sack and slinging it high onto a branch on the shaded side of a tree, high enough to be in a breeze.

There was a degree of isolation about farm life, of course, but brought up as she had been by a father who could never get far enough away from civilisation, this was no real problem for Ruth. In any event, many of the communication facilities that are taken for granted today were simply not available in those pre-war days. There was no question of airmail or telephone to England. It was possible to cable, but only in emergencies. One simply wrote a letter and waited a patient three months for a reply.

Their car at that time was an A Model Ford. This was mostly driven by Ruth. Charles didn't learn to drive until after he had left the sea and he was never very good at it, nor did he particularly care for the task. Ruth, on the other hand did, so whenever possible he left it to her. Fortunately, he had implicit faith in her driving.

One of the fascinations of farming in those days was the 'machine'. This was an formidable array of harvesting implements, consisting of a cutter which cut chaff, a drum which threshed hay, a press which baled the straw and a badger box in which the 'machine man' had his office and bunk, all drawn along by a steam traction engine. It was huge and awesome machinery.

One day when the machine was on Nutshell, the machine man, Sam Johnston, sent to the house for some jam. A drive belt was slipping, and the way to get it going, Sam explained to Ruth later, was to apply a little jam! Years later, in the days of refrigerators, Ruth arrived home from a trip to Hobart to find the long legs of various sons and their friends stretched out on the kitchen floor. They were trying to repair the refrigerator. The belt had come off and they couldn't get it to work. Ruth was able to point out that all they needed was a little jam. They soon had it working!

Sam Johnston was renowned for his speed and efficiency. One year on Colebrookdale, the property Ruth and Charles later owned, Charles succeeded in growing a bumper crop of wheat. This was cut and stacked into two huge square stacks (called square but actually rectangular), side by side so that one could be threshed and then the other without the machine being moved. Sam and his men went about it with a will. By the end of the day they had threshed over a hundred tons of hay, which to those men was an achievement about on a par with a cricketer scoring a double century in a test match.

Like everybody else, Charles's permanent hired hand was impressed. "So you got through over a hundred tons today, Sam!" he said to the machine man that evening.

"Yes, and it would have been a bloody sight more if those men had worked a bit harder!" Sam rapped.

Nobody minded. It was taken for granted that Sam would never be satisfied, but it was hardly a fair criticism. Those men took a pride in being able to work hard. To say that a man was a good worker in that

rural community was to say that he was all right, no matter what his other faults might be.

Ruth was once told a story by Mrs Bisdee, wife of a prominent Midlands pastoralist, about an incident when the 'machine' was on their property. Her sons, who were then very young, went out early one morning and removed every nut they could move from the traction engine. A lot of time was wasted putting the nuts back before the chaff could be cut.

Mrs Bisdee was unperturbed. "If they don't get it out of themselves when they're young, they'll be dreadful when they're in their forties!" she declared.

A woman called Mrs Manning used to ride her bicycle from the township to do the Monday washing. She was a fine woman, full of energy and a devotedly hard worker in the community. Whenever a Red Cross or Football Club function was held she was always there helping with the washing up and whatever else had to be done.

On a cold day, she would take off a jacket, probably borrowed from her husband, and begin work. As she warmed up she would remove a cardigan or two, then a sweater or two, then a blouse or two! One wondered how many layers a woman could possibly wear!

Like both her father and her husband, Ruth has always held an innate belief in the worth and dignity of people, no matter what their lot in life. This was enhanced by rural life. The longer she lived on the land, the more she came to meet and know people like Mrs Manning, people without so many of the advantages she had been able to take for granted. They had little money to spend, at best only rudimentary education and rarely the opportunity to travel more than a few miles from their own district, but they were hard working and community spirited, forever helping and supporting each other.

It is a commentary on their decency that Ruth can recall only once hearing a farm worker use foul language, and that only happened because the man's voice carried in a strong wind.

While they were at Nutshell one of their neighbours, Nan Masterman, who lived at Bagdad on a property called Chauncey Vale, took a trip overseas. On her way back to Tasmania Nan cabled Charles and Ruth asking if they would sell her a piece of land that had once belonged to Chauncey Vale but had been sold off to Nutshell. The back run of this land

went over Brown's Caves and down into Chauncey Vale. Charles agreed willingly; it was a dreadful place to gather sheep.

While away, Nan married a man called Anton Rosenthal. At that time, in the 1930's, there still existed strong feeling against things German. Some time after their return, they became sick of the hostility aroused by their German name and changed it to Chauncey. Nan became well known as a writer of children's books and wrote many books under the name of Nan Chauncey.

A man called Eric Iles worked for Charles at Nutshell. One of Eric's prime concerns before taking the position was the proximity of a school. He was always most anxious that his children should have the opportunity to get on in life. One of his sons, Cliff, is a former member of the State Parliament and now Executive Director of the Hobart Chamber of Manufacturers.

To begin with, Ruth kept her house fastidiously, as Emily had taught her. The windows were cleaned regularly, the silver always beautifully polished and that sort of thing, but things tended to lapse from the time of a shed hand becoming injured. Charles asked her if she could possibly lend a hand. Ruth had help in the house and readily agreed. With an increasing family to keep her busy, she never returned to those fastidious ways.

From then it was one of her regular jobs to help in the shed at shearing. She did this for about twelve years: sweeping the floor, picking up (the fleece), skirting, sorting pieces, even bulk classing if Charles was absent. Ruth maintains that classing is logically a woman's work; she has a feel for the different qualities of wool.

Woman's work or not, Ruth loved it all and could cope as well as any man. Admittedly it was only a small shed but she could do all that and keep up with three blade shearers.

From time to time, she had other tasks on the farm. They had a horse with an injured shoulder. It could not be walked to the house and they had to take buckets of warm water to treat it out on the paddock. They were intrigued to find that the sheep on the paddock would follow them. They couldn't think why this was until Charles remembered that some some eighteen months earlier, during a particularly dry winter, they had hand-fed those sheep with pellets. They hadn't forgotten that a bucket in somebody's hand meant something good to eat.

Ruth was never happy unless she was learning something. For a while at Nutshell she took singing lessons from a woman well known in Hobart music circles, Mme Lucy Atkins (Mrs Frank Purchas). Ruth was sure she would never be a good singer, but it was an interest.

She had greater success in learning to ride, but at first she found it difficult. Charles was making a poor fist of teaching her. Such was his character that he always strove to be at the top of whatever he did, anything from horse riding to politics, and failures frustrated him. For this reason he was a poor teacher, readily criticising errors and saying nothing about work well done. Had it not been for Helen Dunbar arriving and pointing this out, Ruth might never have learned to ride.

At that stage it was not yet such a big family that they lacked for social life. They made friends of several of their neighbours. They saw a lot of the Swan family, farmers at Bagdad, the Geoff Butlers, and Maldon Weston, a widower who lived in a fine old house next door.

There was the occasional trip to St Helens to visit Ruth's parents. Emily and Stanley had bought a house in St Helens, smaller than Fair Lea, called the Bungalow. It had belonged to a Captain Rose, a retired Indian Army officer.

One night when Ruth and Charles were staying with them in the Bungalow, they were joined for the evening by young George, then barely out of his teens. The three men sat around talking and enjoying their beer until the early hours of the morning, long after Emily and Ruth had gone to bed.

George eventually succumbed to the effects of the beer and Stanley, who could hold his drink like few men could, was surprised and asked Charles if he thought George might have eaten something that disagreed with him.

The party did not last much longer. They were about to open another bottle when it exploded, making a fearful mess. That was end; they went to bed.

The ever patient and faithful Annie James, a devout Methodist, was impelled to say her piece in the morning when she found the mess. She looked at the mountain of bottles, looked at Stanley, and said, "Oh, Mr Hodgson!" Not another word.

Chapter 10

The Children

While at Nutshell Ruth had two more children: Joseph George (Joe), born on January 26, 1936 and William Michael (now Michael, then Bill), born on April 2, 1937. Michael, unfortunately, was born blind in one eye. This was not discovered immediately, and when he was examined some time later it was found that the optic nerve was severed.

Michael had the added misfortune of becoming asthmatic. Ruth was able to help him by making him a special mattress. She took a fleece and washed it. It was the poorest one in the shed but it came up beautifully. She put it in ticking and buttoned it up, making a successful mattress.

Joe, as a baby, once caused great amusement. He crawled only for a short time before walking. On this occasion, Ruth was visited by a school friend with her baby. Joe watched the child crawling with the sort of look a man has when studying a new type of machine. Then he started laughing, a robust, chuckling laugh that set Ruth and her friend off too. He laughed and they laughed until he had them in convulsions!

When Michael was born Charles thought that it was time to call a halt. Four was a nice family, he suggested. Ruth was shocked. No more babies! The idea was not to be countenanced, and she is glad she won the day, now as much as ever. Imagine if there had been no Robert, Mary, Rose, Peter or Pauline, nor Robert's five children, Mary's two, Rose's three, Peter's two and Pauline's two, all making their way into life.

Living on a farm enabled the children to learn quickly about the realities of life. One day Ruth took one of her children with her while she fed the pig. They arrived to find the pig giving birth to a litter. Out they popped in quick succession, dear little white things. Every one of them without fail instantly turned sharp right for the food counter. It intrigued Ruth that their instinct could be so unerring.

John had a sense of the dramatic. Little more than a toddler, he was walking one evening with his parents and brother Charles through some scrub near the farmyard. Suddenly he stopped. The others walked on for a short while before they realised that he was lagging, then called him.

He stood his ground. "Nug might bite!" he told them after a suitable pause for effect.

His father killed the snake.

John could be painfully candid. Ruth's old music teacher, Mary Corvan, sometimes came to stay. She was a big-breasted woman and once, just as she was arriving, Ruth heard her son say to her: "You've got a lot of milk!" Ruth pretended not to hear, and it was never mentioned by the good-natured Corvy.

Ruth was driving home one day with John beside her when he asked, "Why does a bull have a bag and not give milk?"

"Everything grows from seeds," Ruth explained, "and that's where the bull keeps seeds to make the calves. The seeds grow inside the cow and then you have a little calf."

"Oh! But how does the bull get the seed into the cow?"

Ruth paused. How would she answer that one to a three year old?

"I know," he cried. "He tips it in, like Daddy does with the drill (sowing machine)."

"Yes dear, that's it, exactly!"

Of great help to Ruth was the family doctor, Terence Butler. Sometimes, when there was illness in the house, she would overcome the problem of distance by phoning Terence. In this way she frequently got the advice she needed. In the normal course of events he was fairly stiff with his fees, but he never grudged her nor charged her for that service.

This spared her a lot of worry because at that time poliomyelitis was rife. When she phoned him about a child with a fever he would tell her to sit him up in bed and get him to touch his toes. If he couldn't, he was to be brought into town quickly. If he could, it was simply a matter of keeping him bed and looking after him. "And throw away the thermometer!" he would yell.

Terence didn't speak, as a rule, but shrieked! But if his patient was very ill he was as quiet and gentle as a good nurse.

He had a preoccupation with matters of diet. John as a small child was disposed to eat things like wall plaster and to lick the sheep licks. At the same time he was subject to shocking chillblains.

"Can't you see he is trying to tell you something?" Terence demanded in a tone of astonishment and half-annoyance. "Give him calcium."

John was put onto tablets to make up the deficiency and the odd eating habits ceased.

Terence was a good diagnostician and always alert. Once, at about the age of thirty one, not long after Michael was born, Ruth was admitted to the infectious diseases hospital with suspected diphtheria, which was actually quinsy. While there, she was over-sedated with aspirin to the point of intoxication. This had not been noticed by the doctor on duty, but Terence observed the problem at once and had the dose reduced.

That was a dreadful disease. When Ruth was first stricken, Charles, disregarding the risk of infection, had kept her warm in bed by putting his arms around her and holding her until she able to sleep.

The infectious diseases hospital, Vacluse, was a misery. Once there, Ruth had to stay for six weeks. She had nothing to read. Any books taken in had to be left there or destroyed. She was doomed to an intellectual diet of True Romance and True Crime! To this day the sight of them in a shop window makes her feel queasy.

To make matters worse, the girl who worked for Ruth at the time got quinsy too. She was a big, jolly girl called Ivy Wickham. She never failed to annoy Charles by calling him 'Duck'! Ruth was dismayed when Ivy joined her in Vacluse. Charles and the farm hand, Doug Newitt, later to become a successful businessman, were left having to care for the children.

Charles was unable to replace Ivy before Ruth returned home. She arrived to see Doug with a bottle in his hand, walking across the garden to where Joe was crawling, saying, "Here you are you little beggar!"

The family thrived. Doug could roast a joint and make a milk pudding. His mother had taught all her boys to cook.

Diphtheria was a rival to polio as a serious worry at that time. It was a sudden killer. A man working for Charles on a casual basis knocked off in the normal way on Friday night, caught diphtheria, and on the following Monday night he was dead.

Ruth knew how careful she had to be. She was once visiting a neighbour who gave John, then the baby, a mattress to roll on. Only when it was too late did that woman explain in her honesty that it had been used the year before by a child sick with scarlet fever. It would be all right, she thought, because it had been given plenty of airing in the sun.

Had she known, Ruth would not have let the baby near it, and indeed, John got a mild attack of scarlet fever.

They had been at Nutshell for less than four years when they moved to Colebrookdale, but in that time Ruth had learned to be a farmer's wife and accepted the life for what it was: the people about them, the hazards and the endless hard work. It was not everything that a person of her creativity and intellect needed but she was always one to make the best of things. She now had a purpose in life, a husband and children, all around her a profusion of things germinating, growing, living and dying, and germinating again. Before all else, Ruth is a lover of life.

Chapter 11

Colebrookdale: the Life-style.

Colebrookdale is about seven kilometres north of Campania on the Coal River. When the family arrived there in November 1937 it contained about two thousand acres, making it one of the larger farms in the district. Some marginal land has since been sold but it remains a fine property. It is now farmed by Ruth's third son, Joe, who owns other farming land as well.

The house had neither telephone nor electricity. Charles immediately arranged to have a phone installed, and the electricity did not come until 1945.

Charles saw at once that the farm had to have a phone. Without it he might well have missed fat-lamb shipments, for which little advance notice was given. One of the few farms in the district to have a phone at the time was Cranston the home of Marie and Dudley Ransom. That one was linked to the railway system! Because he was virtually 'going it alone' it appeared that Charles would have to pay a large deposit and a huge annual charge, but before the line was completed others along the line decided to have phones installed. Finally, there was no extra cost to anybody!

It was an example of how people in apparently remote places could be backward in their contentment and needed a leader.

Charles succeeded both as a farmer and a citizen of the district. He liked and respected the other people of the community and inspired their confidence. He was absolutely reliable. One man used to come a considerable distance each year in order to get assistance with his taxation return. He would go to nobody else for fear that word would get around that his marriage was de facto. Even Ruth has never known that man's name.

Charles went so far as to explode the myth that it was necessary to cheat in order to make money at horse dealing. He was breeding ponies in the period around the end of World War II, and had resolved at the

outset that he would never misrepresent a horse. One of his customers, who lived in northern Tasmania, once phoned with a view to purchasing a pony. Charles informed him that he had one to suit his needs and asked him when he wanted to come and look at it. The man told him to put it on the train; he would take his word!

The hours on the farm were long and the hard work endless. The farm needed many improvements. This included a great deal of re-fencing. The permanent hired hand, Bill Faulkner, was irate when Charles decided to replace inefficient dead-wood fences with post and wire. Bill argued that it was unnecessary, but Charles knew that there was another reason for his annoyance; he would not be able to jump his horses over wire as he had the piled-up logs!

There was also land to be cleared. The stump pulling was done by Sam Johnston with his traction engine. Sam once left the engine and badger box out on a paddock for the winter, to continue stump pulling in the spring. When the men returned in the spring they found a bag of straw left in the badger box had been turned to a fine chaff by mice!

Ruth quickly made friends. No sooner had they arrived than the wives of other farmers got together and called on her to make her welcome. Those good women, Dinah Eddington, Phyllis Burn, Poppy Tasker and others were to be her friends for many years.

Little Charles gave novelty to the occasion. She was talking to her callers in the sitting room when he suddenly appeared in the doorway. He was black; covered in soot from head to toe! One of Ruth's first jobs had been to sweep the laundry chimney. She had put the soot down in the back garden to be used against slugs. Charles had found it and thought it was bliss to play with.

The boy's father had done something similar when he was a child. It was Sunday. Charles, then known as Harry, and his brother Jack were dressed up in their sailor suits ready to go to church. Their mother left them outside while she dressed. When she came out she found that they had had a fight with soot!

Only a few symbols remained of the style and elegance of Ruth's earlier life: some elegant furniture, good books, a few photographs of people and places belonging to upper middle class England. The house was bleak and depressing. The floors, even in the sitting room, were covered with linoleum. The furniture, which Ruth had seen at the clearing sale, was drab and unimaginative: an old, stiff-backed sofa in the sitting

room with similar stiff old chairs. The paintwork inside and out was equally depressing. The colours in the kitchen, for example, were a dismal navy-grey and brown.

The house was heated by open wood fires and lit at night by mantle lamps fuelled with kerosene. Those lamps, and even the ordinary old hurricane lamps used about the farm, are now expensive antiques and not at all easy to find.

The toilet at Colebrookdale, or lavatory as it was called, was a pan (earth closet) type at the bottom of the garden. Ruth couldn't bear to have her children make that walk on winters' nights so they all had their potties, awful things though they were. Later, a septic tank was installed near the house. When Joe and his wife Josephine took over the house they had a toilet installed indoors.

The scullery was frightful. There was an old dark sink and holes in the floor. Huge native slugs, about six inches long, would crawl up into the vegetables. In time this was re-modelled.

Stanley had helped them with the mortgage, and this time was not in a position to present them with a hot water service as he had at Nutshell. It was several years before they had one installed. The water had to be heated in an urn on the stove and carried in kerosene buckets to where it was needed. Buckets made of kerosene tins were useful. They held more and were lighter than galvanised buckets.

The water supply was limited, furthermore. In dry seasons, the tanks had to be watched closely and water used sparingly. The house now has a ten thousand gallon tank and even with that there are times when water has to be carted to the house in tankers.

Ruth had seen many cottages in England with a well and pump at the back, the source of all the household water! Sometimes one person would work the pump while another washed under spout of water.

Over the years, Ruth did a great deal to improve the house and brighten it up. Rooms were painted with strong, bright colours. It is in the nature of a blonde woman, she observes, to like pastel colours, while a brunette like herself prefers bright, strong colours. Her daughter-in-law, Josephine, who is fair haired, has decorated the house in what Ruth feels to be excellent taste and considers the colours to be far more successful than ones she would have chosen herself. Ruth is proud of what Joe and Josie have done with that house.

It was at Colebrookdale that Ruth first did her own washing. This was done in an outside laundry, with a copper, two tubs, a scrubbing board and a wringer between the tubs. Later she got a hand washing machine which had a hollow, cone-shaped pounder attached to a lever which somebody would have to pound up and down. The first electric machine was not automatic, the water still had to be heated in the copper, but with that large family it was a marvellous improvement.

Ruth recalls seeing objects called 'dolly pegs' which washerwomen used. These were wooden, three-legged stools with a central handle projecting from the 'seat'. The 'legs' were placed in a wooden tub, the handle grasped with both hands and twisted back and forth causing the 'legs' to agitate the clothes.

The washings had been huge: working trousers for five or six men on the line every week; a hundred or so socks slotted through the netting fence.

Until after the end of World War II there was no such thing for people living in the country as having clothes dry cleaned. You either cleaned them yourself with petrol or, more commonly, washed them. Ruth had learned from her mother how to do these things. Emily would have had little idea of how to do a general wash, but she was skilled at washing delicate things and anything woollen. If it wouldn't wash, she would say, it wasn't worth having.

The fuel (wood) stove was of the kind Ruth had always been used to, but this was eventually replaced by an Esse coke stove. That, Ruth asserts, was the best form of cooking she ever had. Later, in the nineteen fifties, they gave the Esse to a boys' home and bought an electric stove.

The only water tap in the kitchen when Ruth and Charles arrived was down in a corner where a dish-washer is now installed.

It was the best part of nine years before it was possible to make most of the improvements needed on the house. The work was delayed by the long bleak years of the war when manpower, money and goods were not available for luxuries like home improvements. Ruth asserts, however, that having all mod cons all ones life isn't living. It's having to do without them and then getting them that's life. She had started as a little almost-rich girl and graduated to a large family and a mortgage. She is in no doubt as to where happiness lies. She is adamant that she was much happier living in those conditions at Colebrookdale than she had been in

those houses of her earlier years, staffed with servants to think of her every need.

One consolation in those early years on Colebrookdale was the garden which gave Ruth a great deal of pleasure, but even this presented problems. The soil was a heavy clay-loam and hard to work, and there was the on-going problem of having to be sparing with water. One year she hand-carried all the laundry water to the garden. It was a thrill to have one of the neighbours remark that they always noticed how nice the garden looked as they drove by.

Radio played an important part in life at Colebrookdale. The children, like most children at the time, were obsessed with their serials. For Ruth it was the difference between deadly boredom while she darned dozens of socks and being able to enjoy a radio programme while she worked. She could actually work faster while listening, she found.

One of her joys was to listen to the late King of England, King George VI. She declares that he spoke the purest of any English she had ever heard. Less enjoyable, but always anxiously awaited, was the news of World War II.

That little battery model was the first radio she had ever had. Throughout her life with her parents there had never been such a thing in the house.

Colebrookdale could be dreadfully cold in the winter. One morning Ruth got up early to plant some cabbages she had bought the day before. When she returned to the house she was so cold that she had to crawl back into bed, feeling quite dreadful. She was suffering from hypothermia. Charles was quite worried, but the neighbour's wife, Mrs Howlett, who was there helping her, soon revived her with hot tea.

Ruth continued with her job of working in the shearing shed. The old shearing shed, near the Colebrookdale homestead, was never very roomy and in 1938 was more crowded than usual. The shearing was only a couple of months before Ruth's fifth son, Robert, was born. Mrs Howlett, was delighted that Ruth should choose to work in the shed during shearing. It meant that she could be paid as shearers' cook.

Most of the girls who came to work in the house at Colebrookdale left to get married. One of the best, and certainly the most hard-working, was Josephine Bennett who married Charles's permanent hired hand, Clarrie Daniels.

Once, when Ruth had gone to Hobart for the day, she returned to find that Josephine had, of her own initiative, set about white-washing the kitchen. Like Ruth, she was sick of the depressing colours the previous owners had preferred.

Her mother had died when she was seven and Josephine was sent out to domestic work at quite a young age. She stayed at Colebrookdale for several years and Ruth said of her that she was the only help she ever had who could work harder than she did herself. This was no small statement; few people had Ruth's capacity for work.

Ruth had not seen Josephine or Clarrie for many years when, to her great joy, her son Charles brought them to visit her one afternoon in March 1988. When it was time to go, Josephine hugged her former employer repeatedly. The respect that had always existed between the two women had grown to affection.

A young woman who came to her later, as companion-help, was Marie Thurley, now Marie Eddington, the wife of a neighbouring farmer. Marie was both conscientious and resourceful. On her pay of five pounds a week, not long after World War II, she could afford to have first class dental treatment, buy the best quality clothes and go to an excellent hairdresser. Marie knew the value of good quality.

Marie took a pride in the way she dressed and it used to annoy her that some of her clothes were ruined by dust that seeped into the Morris Ten utility Ruth and Charles had at the time. It was a great improvement when they sold the utility and bought a nice little Morris sedan.

The roads were mostly rough and hard on cars. None in the vicinity of Colebrookdale was sealed. There was gravel road, in fact, all the way to the Hobart suburb of Bellerive until the 1950's.

Colebrookdale had its ghost. Actually it was not quite on Colebrookdale but on the road that passes through, in a spot called Campman's Hollow. The campman was said by some to have hanged himself from one of the roadside gum trees and remained to haunt the place. Other opinion, more to be believed, has it that he died of old age.

One night, after returning by train from a conference in Launceston, Ruth had to walk from the Lowdina siding to her home. When she arrived in Campman's Hollow she heard a rustle in the trees. She was terrified!

"Who's there?" she demanded in a loud, trembling voice.

A crowd of startled parrots burst out!

There was once the grave of such a man near Fair Lea, in St Helens, but he always slept peacefully. Stanley said the grave was marked on old maps.

Ruth enjoyed farm life and coped well with its rigours, but there were times when she needed a change. Like most men, Charles could not see that the monotony of child care and the conversation of domestic help was at times overwhelming. He went to sales, but didn't count these as relaxation and could not understand why Ruth should want to go with him.

Most weeks Charles went to Hobart. At first Ruth tried to economise by staying at home. She once went three months without leaving Colebrookdale. Mrs Howlett became most indignant and told her she should go out and have a change!

This she did from time to time, and has pleasant memories of days in town. Sometimes they would picnic on the wharf, or when funds were good, go to Hadley's and have a fine lunch for ten shillings, drinking beer from glass-bottomed tankards!

The highlight of the year was the regular seaside holiday. Every summer, even during the difficult war years, the family would pack up and take a complete break from the farm. In the earlier years it was always to Eaglehawk Neck where they would stay at the Fairfield Guest House and later at the Lufra Hotel. Another holiday spot where the family went several times was Cremorne. There they would rent a cottage for several weeks during the summer school holidays. The cottage had no linen or cutlery, and little crockery. They would load a neighbour's lorry with all that they needed!

Like all of her family Ruth loved the seaside and some of her happiest times were spent hunting in rock pools for marine life. It was this that ultimately led her to study invertebrate zoology at the University.

In all of her first ten years at Colebrookdale, two events stood out, something outside the role of farmer's wife and mother of his children. One was the successful sale of a short story and the other the sale of a piece of her own embroidery. These modest successes made her feel more generally useful in the community at large. It was a feeling she was to have some years later when she became a teacher. It was not the same thing as voluntary community work which was to become a big part of her life; this was something which people valued enough to pay her good money.

Chapter 12

Colebrookdale: the Animals

Riding became a favourite pastime for Ruth at Colebrookdale. Bill Faulkner made a track on the paddock behind the homestead where she could ride in the afternoons. She loved to get on the back of a former racing trotter, Kitty Emilius, and gallop around that track. She only had to learn forward and say "Go on Kit!", and off she'd go, flat out! 'Ventre à terre' it is called in French - belly to the the ground! Kitty was a beautifully smooth horse to ride, and she loved a gallop like that.

One wet winter's morning, during lambing, Ruth was helping out on the farm by riding around looking at the sheep. On the way she met their neighbour, Jack Howlett.

"Poor Mrs Hand!" he said.

"Poor Mrs Hand, nonsense!" she replied "I'd much sooner be here in the rain on a horse than scrubbing the kitchen floor."

And so she did. She loved it. She loved the creak of the saddle and the feel of the horse beneath her. She loved the horses themselves: Kitty Emilius and her own pony, Grey Dawn.

Never if it could be helped would Ruth let pregnancy interfere with her normal activities. Only two months before her second daughter Rose was born she told the old doctor from Richmond, Dr Clark, that she thought she would give up horse riding until after the baby was born. He was horrified. He told her she should have given it up at first and gone back to it later.

Grey Dawn once almost died with an inverted uterus after foaling. Ruth, at the time, was in bed after giving birth to Rose. To her great delight, one day she saw through the window two grey ears. Dawn had come to have a feed in the garden! It was the only time Ruth forgave her for raiding the garden; she knew her horse was well again.

The recovery had been due to the competence of the local veterinarian, Damper Gregg. When the crisis was over Charles brought in some rum and milk for the exhausted pony. It would do him more good than the horse, Damper declared, and proceeded to scoff the lot. He was later rewarded for his good work with a good deal more of Charles's rum, and yet later his wife called. She was worried because her husband hadn't arrived home. He was found asleep in a ditch beside the road. He was good vet, but he did drink too much.

On another occasion, when Charles and the other men were out at work, Ruth was left with instructions to keep a close eye on a mare that was about to foal. If there was any sign of the foal arriving they were to call Damper Gregg at once.

Ruth, and Josephine Bennett who was with her at the time, did see the sign of a foal. The mare seemed to be straining and a little hoof appeared. They phoned Damper and waited. They found themselves waiting too long. Delays with foaling could be dangerous, Ruth knew. They tied a rope around the hoofs and pulled. They pulled and they pulled, and at last the foal emerged. They were so relieved; so relieved to see the mare turn and nuzzle her new baby!

Then Damper arrived. "Thank God you did something!" he said. "I couldn't get the car to start." They felt ever so proud of themselves.

Ruth and Grey Dawn understood each other well, but there was one occasion when Grey Dawn did something quite wilful and unexpected. They were galloping down a paddock, and at the bottom of that paddock there was a partly demolished stack of hay. Ruth was not paying much attention, and before she knew what was what, Grey Dawn had launched into the middle of the hay to have a bite. She was rather short in the legs and the hay was deep. She lost her footing. In order not to be rolled on, Ruth threw herself clear of the saddle. She then took hold of the bridle and led her pony out of it.

It happened that there was a workman, Sid Kearney, asleep in the hay at the time. He had finished his lunch and was taking a nap while waiting for a truck to return for another load.

"I was having a nice sleep," he later informed Charles, "and when I woke up there was the pony and Mrs 'ands (sic) 'aving a roll in the 'AY!"

Amused though Sid was, he said nothing to Ruth. He was always very polite.

Sid was a huge man, hard-working and extremely strong, but he was nervous and sensitive. Ruth once put iodine on one of his hands that was infected with ringworm. He made so much fuss that one would have thought she was killing him!

There is another story about Grey Dawn. Once, for no apparent reason, she shied in the middle of a paddock. This was most unusual. When Ruth looked to down to see what the trouble was, she found a lark's nest. Dawn was not going to step on a little creature's eggs.

During the period that Charles was breeding ponies, dozens of ponies would be sent by their owners to Colebrookdale for agistment or service by the arab stallion, Silver King. They all needed exercising and Ruth could take her pick of any of these she chose to ride.

There was an unhappy occasion when one of those ponies brought strangles, a nasty throat infection, onto the property. There was frightful disruption. With the men all busy in the paddocks, Ruth had a string of equine patients. They had to have various medications at various stages of the disease, so the stables had progress charts showing each animal's treatment.

At one stage they had to inhale. A nosebag containing the inhalation mixed in damp bran, would be hung over the horse's neck. This was difficult with the draught sire, Royal Bound. He would put his head in the air so that Ruth couldn't put the nosebag on. When she stood on something, he put his head as close to the ground as he possibly could! She swears he was laughing.

Bounder, as he was called, was a beautiful, gentle beast. When at last he was feeling better and Ruth was able to lead him out to the water trough, he pranced. A neighbour, Jack Howlett, who at that moment was at the house with Charles, was disturbed by the spectacle. He asked Charles if he didn't think it mad to let his wife handle such a riotous sort of horse. Charles was unconcerned. He knew, but Jack couldn't see, that Ruth had the big horse on a loose lead; there was no strain on her arm at all.

One of the children once ran under his stomach while he was drinking at the trough. He looked down at the child, then went on with his drinking. Bill Faulkner used to say that animals have a ban on harming small creatures.

From an early age young Charles was an exceptional rider. He was the first to ride many a pony too small to have an adult on its back. He loved

to enter in steer riding and buckjumping contests at agricultural shows, and when he was older, he increased his skills while working as a station hand in Gippsland, Victoria. More than once Ruth forgave him for coming home from a country show with his clothes in a mess after a winning ride.

One morning at three o'clock, Charles woke Ruth and asked her to come and see a new foal. Ruth was not a bit annoyed at being disturbed. It was lovely to see that little creature in the moonlight climbing onto its gangling legs, reaching for the 'supper tray'. Charles gave Ruth the 'false tongue', a thing from inside the horse that looked a bit like a tongue. The saying was that if you dried it and kept it with you, you would never have any trouble with horses. Ruth lost it soon after so she could never be sure if it really worked!

On another occasion, Ruth was busy working in her kitchen when she heard a strange 'tappety, tappety, tappety,' noise in the passage. She was wondering what on Earth it could be when a dear little pony foal appeared, followed by Charles and Bill Faulkner. They had brought it in through the front door. They correctly believed that Ruth would like it, but they thought it would be more fun to do it that way than to present it at the back door.

The many births on that farm were a source of healthy fascination for the children. Once when a heifer was about to have her first calf, Ruth and Charles went inside for lunch leaving their two elder boys to keep watch. At any sign of problems they were to call their parents at once. They returned later to find their entire family standing in a semi-circle around the heifer each wanting to be the first to see the calf arrive.

Ruth's found animals endlessly fascinating. Once, in the middle of the night, she caught a bat in her bedroom. It was so novel that she woke all her children to show them. It was a dear little thing. She had long hair then and it snuggled up onto her shoulder, under the protection of the hair.

On another occasion Ruth caught a field mouse. She put it in a Fowler jar so that the children might all be able to see it, and fed it on delicacies like rose petals and oatmeal. It washed itself meticulously like a cat, even doing its long tail from end to end. It was later allowed to go free. There were so many field mice on Colebrookdale that another made no difference.

While having a rest one afternoon, Ruth was woken by the croaking of frogs, coming from inside the house! She got up and went out into the

passage where she found frogs leaping towards her. One of the boys had put his collection of frogs in the bathroom and they had escaped. She gathered them up, put them in their tin, and that was put it in a safe place where they stayed until they could be returned to their pond by the river.

Every winter there were motherless lambs brought in from the paddocks, as often as not half dead. Ruth's recipe for their cure was effective: half a teaspoonful of egg-yolk and brandy down its neck, then put it in a cool oven or in front of a very hot fire. Lots of heat, the egg yolk and a little brandy is all they need to bring them around.

These lambs would be made pets, but few remained pets into their adult life. Two exceptions were Barney and Barkiss. Both grew into huge wethers, Barkiss in particular. An adult could sit on Barkiss's back without causing him distress. His name was a pun. He got it when he was first carried into the kitchen, more dead than alive. Weak as he was, he bleated at Charles who carried him and gave him a kiss. Baa-kiss!

He later developed a great weakness for peppermints and, failing them, any other sweets on offer. On evenings when Ruth and Charles arrived home from Hobart, he would come to the door of the car and demand his usual treat. If it wasn't given to him, he would be as likely as not to put his sharp hoofs up on the side of the car and damage the duco. When they arrived home one night there were no peppermints left. Ruth was able to fob him off with an aspirin, which he seemed to enjoy!

Barkiss would follow members of the family for walks around the farm, just like a dog, but unlike a dog, he couldn't leap through a fence. When they came to a fence they would hold the wires apart to let him climb through.

Charles once made a clever quip using that sheep's name. When driving through Campania one day they saw the headmaster of the school, Mr Willis, chasing some sheep out of his garden. "Hello, Willis is barking," Charles said. It was a distortion of that well-known piece of dialogue in Dickens's novel, *David Copperfield*: 'Barkiss is willing'.

Chapter 13

Colebrookdale: the Family

The family continued to grow. On November 26, 1938, Robert James was born. Three years later, on August 26, 1941, the first daughter, Mary Ruth, arrived. Just a year after that, on August 31, 1942, Felicity Rose (Rose), was born at home.

After her decision to have no more to do with the Queen Alexandra hospital, Ruth went to the Alstonia Private Hospital for the births of Joe, Michael and Robert. She has fond memories of Sister Reisz who owned that hospital. She was a fine nurse and a wonderful woman. When Robert was born she looked at the Mabel Lucie Atwell picture of a darling baby on the wall, and said, "You've almost done it this time!" Rob was a pretty baby.

Ruth was nursed by a Sister Shepherd when Rose was born. Sister Shepherd, a resourceful woman, taught Ruth to sterilize linen and cotton by putting it in an ordinary oven. She told Ruth of her life as a child at Margate. Her mother had once nursed her large family through diptheria with onions, boiled in sauce, baked or in soup, for breakfast, dinner and tea. Onions are a specific against colds, but one wonders whether those diptheria germs were frightened off or starved to death!

The big family could sometimes be a worry. All of the children had their moments, what with illness, injury and mischief, but John was the worst worry of all. One day he failed to arrive home from school. Half the district searched for him and he eventually appeared not a quarter of a mile from the house. He had heard the searchers but it hadn't occurred to him that they were looking for him. He had been playing Red Indians, hiding behind tussocks, ambushing white men, then being a white man going after the Indians. The hours that passed went unnoticed.

John was forever in scrapes but he was a survivor. At a picnic on the marsh he climbed a willow tree. He had been warned to be careful of climbing willows because the branches could be so brittle, but the warning was in vain. Ruth and Charles heard the sharp crack of a

breaking branch and looked up in time to see him fall, head first to the ground. They ran to him, terrified because it was a time of drought and the mud was rock hard.

They need not have worried. He had fallen into one of the few remaining puddles of soft mud. Partly out of sheer amusement, but more from relief, they laughed. John was indignant, and he wasn't pleased to be sponged down with water from the river.

A little later he got his revenge, but not out of malice. Ruth and Charles went back to the vehicle, a Bedford utility. They sat down with their backs to side of the ute, when all of a sudden, 'brrrrrm!' the engine started behind them! John had climbed in on the other side and was finding out how things worked.

Once, when Charles Stanley was about five or six, they were visited by their friends the Swans from Bagdad. The girls of that family, who were somewhat older than the Ruth's children, decided they would like to go down to the creek and have a swim. Little Charles impressed them with his discretion and good breeding by going behind a bush to undress. They had great difficulty in containing their amusement when he appeared stark naked for his swim!

When Robert was little, he was taken for a walk down to the marsh with his brother Joe by the girl who was working for Ruth at the time. Robert slipped into the river. Joe grabbed his wrist and hung on for all he was worth. They had a little Australian terrier at the time, and that dog barked furiously and so persistently that the neighbouring farmer, Win Howlett, whose house was across the river, came to see what was amiss. He rescued the child and then he spoke to the girl. She had been sitting, writing a letter not a hundred yards away, taking not the least bit of notice.

Win Howlett was as nice and gentle a man as one could ever meet, but when he later told Ruth and Charles of the incident, they had the feeling that he really had spoken to her!

While Robert was still quite small he lost a finger. It was the fault of of a silly young man who was there relieving the man who usually came to test the dairy herd. He had little to do between milkings and spent his time clowning about with the children. They were playing on a disc plough. Not realising what he was doing, one of the children released the lever that raised the discs from the ground. It sprang back and caught Rob's finger which was resting on the cogs.

He was carried to the house with the end of the finger almost severed. Dr Clark, an American with old-fashioned methods, came up from Richmond and finished the job with his knife! A better doctor, more up-to-date in his methods, would have sent the child to hospital in the hope of having it saved, Ruth asserts. She felt that putting the end of that little finger in the kitchen stove was one of the saddest things she had ever had to do.

There was an incident where Joe badly damaged a finger. While helping his mother by turning the handle of the churn to make butter, he got a finger caught in the cogs. He had the presence of mind to reverse the handle and get his finger free.

Mattocks, too heavy for small children to handle efficiently, were banned. Two of the children, in successive years, had their scalps accidentally sliced by mattocks wielded by a brother!

There was no end to the children's escapades. Robbie as a small child set off to walk to Colebrook with a small suitcase and the Australian terrier trotting at his side. He was picked up and carried home on horseback by his father.

Sometimes their fun required a little ingenuity. An old ~~bath tub~~ ^{dead trough} was used as a boat to sail up and down the Coal River.

Michael, years later, harnessed a draught horse called Punch to a sledge and drove him at break-neck speeds through the nearby bush, with a little brother or sister on the sledge. During those escapades they called Punch 'Rising Fast'.

Snakes were an ever-present danger in warm weather. Like Stanley, Charles disapproved of them being killed in the bush, but they had to be killed near houses or anywhere else that people were likely to be. The boys killed many of them over the years. They would hunt them and kill them as readily as they would rabbits.

There was an unpleasant incident one morning when young Charles, John and Joe were taking the cows to the marsh. The cows went ahead while the boys tussled with an awkward gate. As soon as they had closed it they ran off after the cows, first Charles, then John and then Joe. There was a sudden yell and leap from Charles and an even higher leap from John who ran a considerable distance before he stopped. They had run over a large tiger snake, and John swears to this day that he felt it move under his bare foot. The fact that they were running probably saved one or the other of them from being struck.

It was fortunate that their father was a light sleeper. He was woken one night when Mary was very small by the sound of her screaming from her bed on the verandah. He rushed to her and saw what he thought was snake on her chest. He grabbed it and dashed it to death on the verandah post. It turned out to be a large black ferret, and had had its teeth fastened to Mary's lip.

For the rest of the night Mary was kept in bed with her parents. She thought this was wonderful and kept them awake with her playing. In the circumstances they had to laugh; they could hardly be cross.

Less terrifying, at least for adults who understood what was happening, was a thunderstorm. It was rather more scary for Rose when she was very little. One night during a storm, the family were seated at the diningroom table having tea when there was a loud clap of thunder. Rose appeared in her nightie.

"Did you done heard dat?" she asked.

It sounded so funny that they all began to laugh. They stopped laughing when the lights went out. The transformer had been hit.

Charles once installed an electric fence so that the bull could be confined to his small paddock near the house. This gave rise to an inspired prank. One of the children managed to induce another to piddle on the live wire! Ruth had to cope with the distraught child.

Clarrie Daniels, the permanent hired hand, was also the victim of that fence. Would he put his hand on it and see if it worked, Charles asked when installation was completed.

"Not on your life!" Clarrie replied. "I'll try it on the dog."

He whistled the dog, picked it up and held it to the fence. Clarrie, needless to say, got the worst of the shock, and a bite from the dog in the bargain!

Clarrie was an intelligent and capable man, but he wasn't used to electricity.

The family ate well. At providing good, solid food, Ruth excelled. The ingredients were the best that nature could provide. The meat, mostly mutton or lamb, was slaughtered at home. The eggs were laid by the farm's own hens. For many years the vegetables were supplied by Jack Keating who lived with his large family in a cottage at a far corner of the farm. Spring water from nearby hills supplied his magnificent vegetable garden all the year round.

There was always one neighbour or another to supply other needs: whatever fruit was in season; poultry - ducks, turkey's or geese - mainly for festive occasions; the occasional pig.

Whenever she went to Hobart, Ruth would buy fish or some other treat like tripe or black pudding to provide a change from the eternal mutton. Huge orders would be taken to James Beck, the grocer in Liverpool Street, and those orders would be delivered to the car while Ruth went about her other shopping.

Often while meals were being prepared, the children would hang around for pieces of raw vegetable: carrot or swede. As pieces of potato and other vegetables rattled into the huge black saucepans, Ruth would call out names: Big Charles, little Charles, John, Joe, William, Robert...until there was enough for every member of the family.

Ruth's puddings, which would have been daunting to most city people, were magnificent. Among the tastiest and most sustaining were the jam rolls. She was making one of these roly-polys one day when it was raining and the children were gathered around in the big farm kitchen. As she worked, she started putting Beatrix Potter's story of Tom Kitten and the rats into verse. On and on she went, putting all sorts of Tom Kitten adventures into verse. This kept the children entertained while she went on with her cooking.

Ruth is not impressed by the modern system of processed, packaged foods of every description being supplied by the supermarkets. Not only is most of it lacking in nutritional value, but it leads to people not learning to cook. All they have to do is take something out of a packet, add a bit of milk or water and shove it into the microwave. They don't know what they're eating. How can food, depleted of life, give us good life?

The older of the boys, Charles, John, Joe and Michael, attended a little country school called Ticehurst for most of their primary education. It was about five kilometres from home, on the Brown Mountain road. In those days there were no school buses, and it would have been an unheard of indulgence for parents to take them in the car. For much of the time, rain or shine, Ruth's children walked the distance. At other times, Charles rode a pony and John rode a bicycle. John was not a careful rider and had the occasional bad fall.

Weekends on the farm were often fun. Sometimes the family would go out as a group, looking for insects and other things of interest. Ruth

enjoyed joining in with her children doing this sort of thing. To some extent this made up for her not having had brothers and sisters, nor for the greater part of the time, friends of her own age with whom she could play as a child. To this day Ruth tends to relate to her sons and daughters, now all middle aged, as though they were her brothers and sisters.

On October 15, 1945, the eighth child and sixth son, Peter Crispin was born at the District Hospital in Sorell. Two years later, on July 15, 1947, the last of the family of nine, Pauline Elizabeth, was born at Calvary Hospital.

It was a full life on Colebrookdale, but not an easy one; an easy life can never be full. But it was a life that worked, and it worked because there was love. With all the hard work and irritations a large family can cause, Ruth sometimes gave way to temper, but the love was always there, and Ruth never regretted her lot.

Nor does she regret that her children grew up in that environment with the values of people who live on the land. Simple things like good crops, a good wool clip, good butterfat tests or the birth of a stud calf were as exciting in the waiting as a horse race to a punter. In that rural environment, close to the earth and living things, stresses and strains are absorbed instead of being thrown back at you as they are in the concrete jungle.

In the words of St Francis of Assisi: 'Look how the odours of dung and the lemon tree all combine to become one with man's soul. Truly, man is soil!'

Have we gone too far from the soil?

Chapter 14

One Thing After Another!

With such a big family, it is only to be expected that, for much of time, one or another of them will be afflicted with injury or illness, but there was a period when they might well have thought they were cursed!

The painful series of events had its prelude sometime in 1938. At that time Ruth and Charles still had the Nutshell, which was managed by Eric Iles. One wet day Charles wanted to go there and see how Eric was getting on. He expected, as in the normal course of events, that Ruth would go with him, but this time she begged off. She had tonsillitis and was feeling tired. Charles would not accept this - he never could tell sickness from laziness - and off they went. A few miles down the road, they came unexpectedly upon a large patch of mud. Ruth's judgement erred. She braked too hard, and the Bedford utility, always a beast in slippery conditions, slid off the road into a tree. Nobody was hurt beyond a few scratches and bruises, but a new radiator was needed.

Later that year Charles broke his leg. His horse fell while he was getting cattle off the marsh. A group of neighbours fashioned a bush stretcher with sacks and saplings, and carried him home. The stretcher was so long that he had to be left in the hall while awaiting transport to hospital.

He was first attended by Dr Clark who was true to his old-fashioned methods. He gave Charles rum for the pain and later said that his language was quite terrible while he drove him to hospital. Later in a lift in the Royal Hobart Hospital, Charles heard that it was the same lift in which the Premier, Mr Ogilvie, and members of the official party had been stuck on the occasion of the opening of a new hospital wing. "Heil Ogilvie!" Charles said. Dreadfully rude in 1938!

After returning from hospital, Charles was some weeks in bed with a firescreen as an arch over his legs. He was a good patient, never

grumbling and always grateful for the attention he received. He kept fit doing the morning radio exercises. By working his arms, chest and good leg, he had himself surprisingly fit by the time he returned to hospital to have a walking plaster fitted. Ruth used to dump the baby, Robert, and his bottle on the bed. Both were happy, but when Charles went back to hospital, the baby, who wanted his daddy, became difficult.

During this time Ruth had to take the Bedford to Hobart for repair. Kindly neighbours came to their aid. The wife fed Charles and looked after the children, while the husband arranged to drive into Hobart and give Ruth a lift home.

They met as appointed, but he insisted that they have dinner at Hadleys before driving home. Ruth was dismayed. That man had a reputation without equal for chasing women. Imagine what the people of Hobart would think: Ruth Hand having dinner with while her husband was laid up! But she could not refuse without being rude. Fortunately he did not get fresh. He had tried it once before and had been severely snubbed for his trouble.

On his return to hospital, Charles had the dubious fortune to be in a ward with a Norwegian sailor to whom all men on the staff were 'Doc' and all women, 'Nuss'. Charles was wrongly made to fast. His plaster had to be changed in theatre, but without anaesthetic. He was hungry, so the Norwegian yelled at the men, "Hey Doc!" and the women, "Hey Nuss! Dis man got no dinner. He not have operation!"

Charles got his food.

With the new plaster reaching only to the knee and not above it like the other, and with crutches, Charles was able to walk again. It was a long lesson, regaining the skill of walking, with a leg that would never be quite the same.

Soon after Charles had properly recovered his mobility, Ruth, the baby Robert, and he went to Campania in a trap. While returning home, the ageing hack, Baby Ribbon, stumbled and fell. She was soon up, and Ruth managed to scramble out one side while Charles fell out the other, hurting his ankle. Rob was unhurt, and two bottles of beer, one for Saturday and one for Sunday, fell out, but mercifully didn't break.

Charles suffered a great deal of pain, and Dr Clark treated him for a badly sprained ankle.

As if all this were not enough, Ruth had to have her tonsils out. She was seriously ill. She had had intermittent tonsillitis for years and they

were poisoning her. She sensed the gravity of her condition, and on her way to the hospital went to her lawyers and made a new will. It was raining heavily when she left the lawyers' office. Oppressed by her illness and the constant downpour, she became afraid. She might soon leave her babies.

The infection moved onto her chest. She got septic pneumonia and Charles had to be called for. Fortunately, sulphur drugs had come into use, otherwise she could not have been saved. But something else was needed. Her will to keep going was failing her.

Charles gave her what she needed. He stood at the foot of her bed in St John's Hospital and coldly berated her for giving in. It made her mad! Unable to speak above a whisper, she wrote what she thought of him, then immediately began to get better.

Charles was also receiving treatment. Terence Butler had arranged for his ankle to be x-rayed and a minor fracture was found. A small plaster was needed, but it was a release from the pain. That succession of misfortunes had ended.

Dr Clark never seemed to measure up well against Terence Butler. Mary as a small child got a chill while playing outside, when forbidden, in a freezing wind. Dr Clark was called and it was decided as a precaution that she should be taken to St John's Hospital.

Dr Butler arrived to see her just as they were entering the hospital. She had advanced pneumonia he diagnosed while still ten feet away! There had been no mention of pneumonia until then, and Mary, for a time, was desperately ill.

Even this had its lighter moment. All the fear and tension suddenly abated when Mary, every day of three, gave the children's doctor, Dr Miller, a glad eye! There was no mistaking that Mary was getting better.

"My God!" he exclaimed.

A man goes on being a boy for quite a long time, Ruth believes, but a woman is a woman from the day she is born.

There were the usual children's diseases, but unfortunately, adults sometimes got them too. One winter there was a family spree of whooping cough. Charles caught it but still had to do his work. Ruth would see him clinging to a post in the cowshed, whooping furiously.

"For God's sake see that the children get these things while they're young!" he said to her.

They needed a change of air it was decided. As soon as they possibly could, the family packed up and went to Eaglehawk Neck where they stayed at the Lufra Hotel for a few days. The weather was cold, but they bathed, all but Joe who had been feverish and was still far from well. Strolling on the beach one day, they suddenly missed him. They looked back and saw him, half dressed, out in the waves. He was not done out of his dip, and it did him good!

Cold though it was, Ruth was able to enjoy sea-bathing along with rest. Charles had introduced her to it. He had been used to bathing in Falmouth's Atlantic waves. Once, some years later during a visit to Bruny Island, Ruth was in the breakers while snow lay on the mountains. Charles was with a group of local councillors, be-coated against the cold. He alone envied her.

When measles hit the family, the large children's bedroom became like a hospital ward. Joe was the only one to escape infection. He wore a large red flannel cross on his back and did most of the fetching and carrying.

It was even harder on Charles when, some years later, he caught mumps. Ruth did too, but only slightly and could carry on with a scarf around her head and neck. Charles, on the other hand, became very ill. It developed into encephalitis. As the fever broke, he sweated copiously. Changed sheets would hit the polished floor with a 'plop'!

He had hallucinations. One morning he asked Ruth, when she arrived with his breakfast, to look out the window and tell him what she could see. She saw a huge muscovy drake wagging its tail at her.

"Thank God!" Charles said when she told him. He had been seeing dreadful things, hideous heads moving up and down the wall, in his delirium. The muscovy was a welcome and comic relief.

On another occasion, in 1945, Ruth saw the comical side of illness. She had hepatitis and had been admitted to the Stawell Hospital on Battery Point. A curious school girl visiting another patient was intrigued by the drip gear she could see above the screen around a bed. The girl peeped around the screen and fell flat in faint at the sight of blood entering a patient!

Chapter 15

Widening Horizons

For all the fact that they had to work hard, and had a big family to keep, farm life alone was not enough to satisfy either Ruth or Charles. They soon became involved in community affairs.

This interest began with World War II. It was a time when fear, loss of those killed in action, degrees of deprivation and, most significant of all, work for the war effort, drew people together.

Charles had wanted to go into the navy for the duration, but was rejected for sea duty because of his permanently shortened leg. He was offered a desk position which he refused. He would be of more use to the war effort if he stayed on the land, he decided. Along with most other men who did not go into the forces, he joined the Home Guard. Ruth, for her part, joined the Red Cross and, like most women at that time, was forever knitting things like socks and scarves to send to the troops.

The early years of the war were frightening and depressing for all who were old enough to realise its significance. The prospect of their country being overrun and their children growing up in a community dominated by strange and alien people was then a reality. Evacuation orders were given. When the word came, they were to go to the Tasmanian midlands. The evacuation officer for that district was Dinah Eddington.

It was no disrespect to her friend that Ruth planned to contravene these orders and take her children to hide in the bush. It seemed more logical to her, and experience in other parts of the world indicated that it would have been the safer thing to do. Churchill in fact was advising the English people along such lines.

One day early in 1942, a time when it seemed that nothing could stop the Japanese thrust, Ruth was sitting in the kitchen with Charles looking at a map of the Pacific. They were deeply depressed, genuinely fearing that the worst was to come, when Ruth's mood suddenly changed. It would be all right, she declared. "Something will happen there." She put

her finger on the Coral Sea! She has no idea why she felt that but she had no doubt that she was right.

There was no way she could have known or even guessed about the Battle of the Coral Sea, which was to be the turning point of the war, later that year.

During the war, Charles was a member of the District War Agricultural Committee. A fellow member was his friend Errol Ross, a farmer at Cambridge. Mr Ross is ninety two and still going strong.

Another member was Ted Vaughan, manager of the big rural property, Rostrevor, at Triabunna. One cold night Mr Vaughan phoned Charles, distressed because he had a cow sick with milk fever. Could he come and help? Charles said it would not be possible at that hour.

After a few minutes at the warmth of his fire, Charles went back to the phone and told Mr Vaughan he was on his way. It was typical of Charles that he could not let a friend down. Ruth drove him to Triabunna and the cow was saved.

Community work sometimes had its comical side. Charles took a prominent part in moves to sort out a muddle involving the community hall. It was discovered that the land on which the hall stood still belonged to a family that had donated it without a legal transfer ever being effected. Fortunately there was still a member of that family alive who was only too eager to put things right, and the transfer was made legal.

It was then discovered that the Hall Committee was self-elected and would co-opt newcomers to their numbers as they wished. Because they were not properly constituted they were each, individually, responsible for any debts incurred. They were horrified. There was a public meeting in a packed hall to appoint trustees and a new committee. The old committee failed to get elected, resulting in some strong ill-feeling.

In the meantime, the local cartage contractor, Keith Bailey, had made his lorry available to transport the billiard table from the billiard room adjoining the hall to the schoolhouse verandah so that the billiard room could be used completely as a supper room.

This too was displeasing to at least one member the old committee. That buxom farmer's wife stood up and launched a tirade, ending with words: "As for Keith Bailey and Mr Hand, they are the scum of Campania!" There was loud laughter, to that lady's great discomfort.

Ruth and Charles worked together in these community activities. They both became heavily involved with a farmers' organisation called the

Primary Producers' Union. Charles was President of the local branch and Ruth was Secretary. That was when she started typing. Her first job was to type out a whole annual report. It was a shocking piece of work. Her typing still isn't the best, but it's much better than it was then.

At one stage Charles was on the Executive of the whole union. Another member of the Executive was a Henry Charleston Salmon. He and Charles Henry Hand were sometimes confused.

Ruth became a Justice of the Peace. The proclamation of her appointment, dated 1946, begins quaintly: 'Now know ye Mrs Ruth Hand Esquire...'

By nature retiring and quite unused to participating in public meetings, Ruth was at first almost overcome by nerves even at having to read the minutes of the previous meeting. She talked to a friend, Gusta Flack, who was a psychiatrist, and received some good practical advice on taking in deep breaths and controlling the stomach muscles. In time she became quite fond of participating in meetings and didn't mind making the occasional speech.

At one meeting Ruth was obliged to stand in for the Chairman who had not turned up. The hall was packed and to make matters worse, Charles decided to try her out. He deliberately made things awkward for her until in despair she spoke to the man sitting beside him: "Mr Tenant, I wonder if you would be so kind as to show the gentleman next to you out!" Mr Tenant was already on his feet when Charles raised a hand in capitulation.

Although usually a poor teacher, Charles taught Ruth well how to conduct a meeting. She not only liked the work but it fitted with her belief that women should work alongside men, sharing in their understanding and involvement in what is going on, instead of forever being shoved aside with other women, talking about recipes and baby's napkins.

Nevertheless, Ruth enjoyed what she found to be a wonderful community feeling among both the men and the women. It was a pleasure to work with them in numerous organisations: Red Cross, Parents and Friends and the Labor League. The PPU gave her particular pleasure. She would go to the stock sales and round up members. In that way, she got to know many people.

In those times, before, during and after World War II, the enthusiasm for raising funds for deserving causes - the war effort, the Red Cross or

the school - was absolutely amazing. One Brown Mountain farmer, Alf Harding, unfailingly attended meetings and other activities, travelling the ten kilometres or so in his horse and trap, and pouring rain made no difference. Mr Harding would wrap himself in his oil-skins and set off as cheerful as on a sunny day.

Sadly, it is no longer the same. There are so many of the people there now who are not part of the community at all. They are Sunday farmers, living there because it's a nice place to live, in a purely physical sense.

Ruth was far more in tune with the hard-working people on those committees in the district where she lived than with the socialites of Richmond, further down the road towards Hobart. She has always been more at ease in the company of people with whom she could associate in the course of some useful activity than among those preoccupied with their social status.

That long experience of community work gave Ruth an important part of her development as a person. Had it not been for that, she might never have had the nerve to return to university, or to take up teaching. It was an important part of the process of breaking away from the lingering influence of her dominant father; something she was doing in her own right as an independent person.

Charles once overheard in a Richmond hotel one of the Richmond elite saying, "Wait until we get the blighters back onto five bob a day; that'll put 'em where they belong!" No doubt giving vent to his feelings about the demands of trade unions. That made Charles mad and was one of the reasons he became a Labor politician. He believed strongly in the dignity of the working man.

On one occasion, Ruth was her Branch delegate to an A. L. P. conference in Launceston. She had to propose a motion seeking assistance to people who needed housekeepers because of illness or disability. There was a heavy agenda, mainly union business, and the Premier, Mr Cosgrove, asked her if she would withdraw it or let it be included in something else. Ruth said she wouldn't because important elements of her branch's motion didn't appear elsewhere on the agenda. She put it to the conference and was delighted by the way it was received, and with the way that male-dominated gathering received her.

One year, Ruth stood for the Richmond Council. She got every 'single' vote in the ward, and none of the multiple votes of the larger property holders except those from Colebrookdale. The larger property holders

were spared the pain of having a woman, a Labor woman at that, on the Council.

Chapter 16

Politics

Charles stood for the Tasmanian House of Assembly as one of the Labor candidates for the electorate of Franklin in 1946. He was narrowly defeated. Bill Neilsen, later to become Premier, scraped in ahead of him, the third of the three successful Labor candidates for that electorate.

In 1948 the upper house, the Legislative Council, rejected Supply and the Government called an election. Charles stood again and was successful.

It was a happy occasion for the family, and there was more to come. In 1950 Charles was appointed to Cabinet.

Although delighted by her husband's achievements, for Ruth it was a mixed blessing. She soon found herself correcting him for taking himself too seriously. He was inclined to be Ministerial at home and she reminded him that he stopped being Minister at the gate, and Daddy Hand came in. He took it in good part.

Far more significant was the fact that her role as a member of the team changed, and not for the better. Until that time they always *had* been a team, working together, sometimes outdoors sometimes indoors, shoulder to shoulder on the farm or in the course of their community work, and shoulder to shoulder in fighting two elections. When Charles entered parliament something was lost. Her role changed; community work no longer offered her a mental outlet and her place in the team became that of chauffeur (when not in his official car) and spouse to accompany him at social functions.

There were endless social responsibilities, and that was something she was not good at. One rarely made real friends, only temporary allies, who would spear you in the back if it suited them. Ruth's interests outside the house, once a pleasure, had become a chore.

Among the few with whom she did become friends were Pat and Jean Murphy. Pat was then the Clerk of the House of Assembly. Even this had a

shakey beginning. Charles told her later that for a long time, Jean had detested her for her 'acting'. It took Jean quite some time to realise that Ruth's not very quiet way of speaking and habit of gesticulating were not acting but simply 'her'!

Charles used to say to her: "You are a clever woman, but with people you are a bloody fool!" She believes he was right.

Another consolation of political life was the chance to meet many interesting people who visited the state, like four police chiefs from India, each from a different area. One, a Pathan, told Ruth that in his country women in childbirth were put in a room lined with swords so that the baby, if a boy, would grow up to be a fighter!

Another visitor to the state while Charles was in Cabinet was the Lord Mayor of London. On that occasion, Ruth's eldest daughter, Mary, demonstrated an aptitude for social life that far excelled her own. Charles was invited to the official dinner at the Town Hall in the Lord Mayor's honour, but this was inconvenient for Ruth who wanted to attend an address by a visiting Oxford lecturer on the same evening. Mary accompanied Charles in her stead, and was a great success. Later, at an afternoon reception, Lady Park, the wife of Sir Archibald Park, Hobart's Lord Mayor, asked Ruth where her lovely daughter was.

Charles was Minister In charge of Sesquicentenary celebrations in 1954. The celebrations included a visit from Queen Elizabeth II. Ruth's wardrobe was limited and Charles gave her one hundred pounds, then quite a lot of money, to spend on suitable clothes. At a great reception in the City Hall they were presented to the Queen.

Their enjoyment of the celebrations was marred when Ruth and Charles were travelling to Launceston in a car with the Sesquicentenary organiser, Geoffrey Walch (later Sir Geoffrey Walch) and his wife Thelma. They came upon a road accident involving about six cars and an army truck. A drunken soldier in the truck had caused the smash. A big sedan was on its side nearly two paddocks away. In one car there was a baby. Both its parents were killed. Ruth later taught that child at Fahan School.

In 1955 Charles visited Pakistan. He told many anecdotes about that visit, including one about a trip that took them to the Afghanistan border in the mountains. He saw a notice telling travellers that before crossing a certain line they must comply with passport regulations. His companions told him to disregard it. If he stepped across that line he would be shot!

On another occasion, while in Pakistan, he was invited to address a group of students on the subject of agriculture in Tasmania. He was warned that these students were a turbulent lot and he might do better to make an excuse and put it off. Charles declined to do that, and the address proceeded. There were colour slides and, as fate would have it, the first slide appeared upside down.

He had forgotten that it was taken in Tasmania, in the southern hemisphere and should have been put in the projector the other way up. Charles calmly explained. There was a roar of laughter; the tension was broken and the talk was a great success.

For Ruth, new difficulties were emerging. Although only forty two when her husband was first elected, the hard work and long hours she been used to were becoming too much. To add to the demands on her energy, there was the new baby, Pauline, to care for. She would have to get up at half past five to feed her baby before giving Charles, who continued to be an early riser, his breakfast at six. There was still the big house to keep and the big family demanding her attention. Her usual zest for life began to diminish. Ruth was becoming run down.

She was never one to let a problem get on top of her if she could help it. With regular holidays and the stimulation of Charles's achievements and high standing in the Government, she managed to keep going, but by 1955 it was becoming impossible to keep going on nervous energy. The decline in her health became serious. She became extremely run down and was on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

Once, she had been able to give vent to frustrations and disappointments with hard physical work, but at the age of forty eight she could no longer do that without becoming over-tired. In any event, as the years wore on, there was less need for her to work so hard. There was capable help in the house for the most of the time and the family was growing up, some leaving home. Her real problem, the real frustration, was lack of mental activity.

In 1953 Ruth studied matriculation French and succeeded in getting a credit. This was done by correspondence and by following a phonetics course on radio. Her correspondence teacher was a Miss Weaver, the sister of a Campania farmer.

It was by no means enough, and when it was over the problem continued. Ruth appalled her doctor by deciding to go back to university. He was sure it was the road to an early grave, but she soon proved him

wrong. Study rejuvenated her. The richness of literature, her delight in language and in the history that lies in language were the tonic that restored her.

In 1956 Charles became seriously ill. He got blood poisoning from an insect bite on his leg, and a clot formed. The pain he was suffering was wrongly diagnosed by a specialist as being muscular, and he was put onto a course of physiotherapy. Charles suspected it was not muscular and sought another opinion. Terence Butler was called in, and he immediately doubled the dose of antibiotics Charles was taking, and ordered fierce poultices on the knee. This controlled the blood condition but the clot was already on its way to become a pulmonary embolism.

Charles was still convalescing when a member of Cabinet resigned and joined the Opposition. This deprived the Government of its slender majority and an election was called. As a member of Cabinet, Charles had been a good administrator of his departments, but his attention to that aspect of his work was inclined to encroach upon time he should have given to his electorate. He could not afford to give ground to other candidates and his illness, which prevented him from campaigning effectively, cost him his seat.

The sudden loss of his prominent position, his associations with many prominent people and the salary, was at first shattering, but as time passed and it could be viewed objectively, it became fairly clear that it had happened for the best. Politics was putting too great a strain, not only on his family life, but upon himself. It was not in his character to be able to endure indefinitely a career in which endless compromise was necessary for survival.

He departed from politics with an untarnished reputation, as a man of both honour and ability, and one who had achieved a great deal, particularly in the six years that he was a Minister of the Crown. This was recognised with the award of the C. B. E. and later with the prospect of being appointed Tasmania's Agent General in London.

The idea of going to London did not suit Ruth at all. She made a stand. She would not resist his taking the position, but she made it plain that she would not go herself. They could not have taken the whole family with them and she was not prepared to leave even her adult sons who had no other relations to whom they could look for support.

She would have hated it, moreover. Entertaining was simply not her scene. She would quickly get bored at chatter about the same things over

and over again. The conflict was resolved when Charles let it be known that he would not accept the position.

One of Ruth's friends who was married to a politician once said to her that politics absolutely wrecked family life. Ruth is inclined to agree.

Charles retained an interest in public life. The affairs of the Clarence Municipality at that time were in a mess, and in 1957 the ratepayers voted for a Government appointed Municipal Commission. Charles was the Commission's first Chairman, a position he held until his death in 1966. He enjoyed his involvement in Local Government and, always a good administrator, was successful in meeting some of the rather difficult challenges it presented.

Municipal affairs actually brought Ruth and Charles closer together after his years in Cabinet. She could help him to see the ratepayer's point of view, especially when it came to objections to deplorable roads!

There were other Government appointments as well. Charles became a member of the Library Board and a member of a tribunal for the determination of Public Service salary awards.

There was never any thought of his returning to politics. There were many practical reasons for this, but the main reason was something else. It had lost its savour. To have persevered with so demanding a career, without a sense of vocation, would have been impossible.

Chapter 17

Stanley's Death

Stanley died of cancer a few days before his seventy ninth birthday in January 1955.

It was a life that was never properly resolved. He was a strong, energetic man with fine talents, physical presence and personality, but sadly, the exercise of his energies was never so directed that he came remotely near to realising his full potential for achievement. That alone might not have mattered, but it is a sad thought that he, and Emily with him, never really succeeded in putting down roots, not even in St Helens where they lived on and off for the better part of twenty years.

Much stems from the fact that Stanley did not have to work for his living. There was never the involvement in whichever community he lived that stems from having to relate to people in the course of a profession or business. He was independent; he could be as friendly or as remote as he pleased. He was, moreover, intellectually lazy. He read a great deal and applied himself to his love of nature but never to the point of profound mental discipline.

Another difficulty was the fact that his independence did not go so far as to allow him the life he wanted. His tastes were the opposite of Emily's. They had to compromise, he never so far away from civilisation as he would have liked, and she nearly driven mad by the degree of isolation she had to endure. His attachment was to the bush and nature, never to a particular place.

He had no idea of the general welfare but was generous at the level of individual to individual. He would lend money to men he barely knew if they were in distress. Even to lazy swaggies he was generous. If a person who worked for him fell from grace, he could always, in his charity, see why. He saw the good in people rather than the bad. People's faults had to be shoved under his nose with hard evidence before he could see them.

All in all, he was a fine man: kindly and generous to those near him; unshakeable in his sense of duty; unbending in his standards of behaviour and appearance; a gentleman. For all his lack of realism in some ways, his philosophy was often sound and his approach to many problems was down-to-earth and sensible.

On matters of international affairs, Stanley could be highly perceptive. He clearly foresaw World War I, but no businessman would believe him. There wouldn't be enough money for a long war they pointed out. Stanley, a keen reader of history saw plainly that there was always enough money for war!

He also saw the danger to Australia in the Pacific at the outset of the war. Charles was one to make light of that idea.

It speaks highly for his humanity that his sister Helen was able to confide in him when she began menstruating. She had been brought up in total ignorance of matters of sex, and all but panicked when she found herself bleeding. She didn't dare talk to her mother, but she did dare talk to her brother, fifteen years her senior. Ever a realist about matters of nature, Stanley took her with him when he went hunting. He illustrated his explanation of the workings of her anatomy by opening and dissecting rabbits.

The same might have happened to Ruth had Stanley not had that experience. He gave Emily strict instructions that she was to be thoroughly informed. Emily hated having to do it. She would say there was nothing so nice as a girl's innocence. And nothing so damned silly, Ruth adds.

Wishing, while in her teens, to become a nurse, Ruth had her physiology books. When she was about eighteen Emily saw one of her books and in it the sketch of a naked male. Ruth heard her ask Stanley if he thought it suitable reading for their daughter. Stanley snorted! He had no qualms about what she learned by way of science. It was never certain how he might have reacted had he realised how much of the seamy side of life was revealed to her in classical myths and legends, and the ancient literature!

On one side of his character, Stanley was a practical man. He was a fine gardener and extremely clever with tools. He made all his own things like chicken houses, dog kennels, and beehives, often to ingenious, and always practical, designs.

He was a fine cabinet maker. For the little drawers in the cabinets he made, he would use hardwood obtained from beer cases, or for very little drawers, cigar boxes. He would painstakingly plane his timber down to a fine finish then polish it, or get Ruth to polish it, with sandpaper and Beeswax. Ruth still has a cupboard he made for his stamp collection. On top of it stood the great album, with all the little drawers underneath.

Throughout his life, Stanley had the nineteenth century attitude of superiority extending to all things like race, religion and politics. 'My church is the only possible one.' 'My political party is the only one.' It was sheer bigotry.

His social outlook, too, belonged to the nineteenth century. While living as a young woman in St Helens, Ruth became friendly with a group of holidaymakers who had joined the local tennis club. If she saw them driving from their boarding house to the tennis courts, she would get on her bicycle and ride off to join them. Stanley mistakenly believed that her interest in the group was centred upon a particular young man, a professional man, presumably of good character. He asked her if she would would like him (for marriage). He could get him for her, Stanley claimed.

Ruth was horrified! Nothing she could have said would have made her father see that had he so much as attempted to arrange a marriage for her, she would have been a laughing stock as long as she remained in Tasmania. She said the first thing that came into her head: "Oh no, Father. I never want to get married."

He told her years later that he was terribly sad that she didn't want to marry. The truth would never have dawned upon him.

When Ruth and Charles first went to live at Colebrookdale, he told them that they should go to the people who lived across the river, ask them if they had any problems and offer any help that was needed, just as his parents might have done for their tenants in England.

This time Ruth spoke plainly. These were not tenants but co-farmers. They would be furious, she told him, to have people butting in on their business.

On environmental matters, Stanley's views were thoroughly sound. All of his gardening, for example, was organic, and he was a very successful gardener. Yet he was not unbalanced in this respect. He admired tremendously many of the technical advances of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The fact that he was uneasy with the more

rapid advances of the twentieth century is probably not so much a denial of the merit of man's inventiveness and ingenuity as a reflection of his concern that mankind was out of step with the world in which it lived.

Some of his fight against modern technology was simply a matter of not letting these things interfere with his life. He would not have a telephone in his house. It never seemed to matter; he managed quite nicely by writing letters and paying visits. Nor would he endure radio or a gramophone, but Ruth did have her own gramophone which she enjoyed very much. One wonders how he would have coped with television. He would not have gone so far as to put his boot through the screen, but it is highly probable that he would have taken it outside and dumped it!

After leaving The Bungalow in St Helens, at the beginning of World War II, Emily and Stanley had various homes in or near Hobart. For a while they lived at Browns River, Kingston, but Stanley had taken the house on trust and found it to be unsatisfactory. They stayed in hotels occasionally, and for a time had a flat in Augusta Road. They lived comfortably for a couple years in a house in Lindisfarne but had to leave just after the end of the war when it was required by the owner's family.

Their last residence was a cottage in Richmond. By this time they were both quite old and Stanley was suffering from cancer of the bowel. Sick as he was, he set to work and made a magnificent garden, and was planning its continued development only a month before he died.

In the last weeks of his life he became distracted with the pain and the heavy doses of morphia which he needed. He would be found wandering in the streets of Richmond in the early hours of the morning. It was the opinion of his specialist, Dr Rogers, that the cancer had been there for forty years, but now the pain, even for brief periods, was unbearable. He became so difficult that he and Emily fell out and he lived at Colebrookdale for a few weeks.

Eventually, he was taken to the geriatric hospital, St Johns Park. There, they told him, to his astonishment, that he was dying. He told Emily he wanted to die at home. Old as she was, she promptly ordered a taxi and, in the face of all objections, took him back to Richmond where, very soon after, he died.

Emily nursed him most faithfully during his last illness. She was with him at the end.

PART THREE

LATER LIFE

Chapter 1

Work and Study

Ruth returned to University in 1956. She enrolled for just one unit, Invertebrate Zoology, what she wanted in order to enhance her pleasure as she explored the rock pools at the seaside. Trepidations by Professor Hickman, who died recently aged about ninety, that she might not have the stomach for dissections of worms and the like were quickly dispelled. She assured him that she would find it fascinating and couldn't wait to begin.

The diversion was invaluable in what was a particularly difficult year. The study gave her the purpose needed to see her through a succession of misfortunes, the worst of which was Charles's illness. She was terribly afraid for him and was under so much stress that she walked in her sleep, something she was not given to doing. It happened while she was staying with her friend Molly Taylor. She had climbed out of bed on the wrong side and hammered on the wall.

Rather than to be taking money, Ruth wanted to make her own contribution to the family budget. She wanted, moreover, to make some contribution to the community outside her family commitments. In 1959 she did an education course by correspondence and in that year began work at Fahan School as a special subjects teacher. She became a registered teacher in 1960 and a registered special subjects teacher, in English, in 1961. In 1963 she was registered for special subjects in both English and French.

She liked the girls she taught and it gave her great satisfaction to be working as a part of a staff, earning her own living, doing a job and having responsibility for which she was paid and answerable for her results. It concerns her that all too often men do not understand the needs of a wife to have interests outside the home, apart from the family.

One of her pupils said to her one day, "Mrs Hand, you must hate some of us." She replied that she had never disliked a pupil. Some of them were abominably annoying at times, but if she couldn't get to understand

them, it was her fault, not theirs. With many of them she got along well. She still meets some of them around town and they always greet her affectionately.

In 1960, after a break of thirty two years, Ruth resumed studying for her Bachelor of Arts degree. The University accepted her on the basis that she could count all the subjects passed when she was there before she married, provided there were no failures. One failure and she would have to go right back and start again at the beginning. This was a little unnerving and Ruth worked hard. There were no failures.

She had a great deal of success, in fact. Out of a total of six units, in which she majored in English and French in the next three years, she gained one distinction and five high distinctions! In her first year, she won the *Sir Philip Fyshe* prize in English. She would have won the prize for third year English, in 1961, but she could not qualify because the sponsor of the prize, her old friend Professor Bert Taylor, had stipulated an upper age limit. Bert was sincere in his regret.

Unlike many students, waiting for the results at the end of the year gave Ruth pleasure. Little wonder! She will never forget her astonishment when she got her first high distinction. She got two that year, both French and English. She went into the bookroom where two friends worked, began to tell the news and burst into tears. They hurried to comfort her. When Ruth was able to stammer that she had got two H's they realised that she hadn't failed.

"It's too buch for be," Ruth told them as she wiped her eyes and blew her nose.

In addition to those later achievements, Ruth had gained a distinction in Latin in 1928, thanks to the excellent grounding given to her by the Reverend Nicolas. It was, all said and done, a most successful degree.

The long time gap, she regards as a blessing. Youth's fine restlessness was gone, and a happy marriage, with many children, achieved. There was now complete motivation; a mental and physical rejuvenation, relaxing from physical strain, and fulfilling mental needs. Her life was enriched. She spoke to other older students who experienced the same thing.

Accompanied by other members of the family, Charles proudly attended the conferring of the degree. he was irritated by a man sitting behind him who had been persistently making sententious remarks and, when Ruth's turn came, saying something to the effect that she had taken

long enough get it. Charles turned and looked at him, reducing him to agonized silence!

In 1963 Ruth took the year off from University, and resumed in 1964 when she began her Honours degree in French which she completed in 1966 and had conferred in 1967.

Through it all, Ruth studied for the joy of it. Her pleasure in success was for the successes in themselves, not because she was beating somebody else. She was, in fact, beaten by one of her fellow students, Stephanie Oates, who put a great deal more work into her thesis than she had done.

To Ruth this mattered not one scrap, but Charles was perplexed. He could not understand this lack of will to be the best. He had been surprised when she took a year off. He had no idea what staleness meant. It escaped him that there were limits to her energy. She had her teaching to do and a house to keep.

It was typical of him, however, that he had backed her fully, both in her efforts to find employment and in her return to university. Unlike her doctor, he knew that she needed to study, and he was never a sexist.

For Ruth, university training filled out a life that might otherwise have been the product of a self-centred childhood and mind-limiting household duties. It taught her to read well and logically, and widened and enriched her life. She lived the books and the poetry she read. Chaucer and Shakespeare gave a new richness to her life.

During the time of Ruth's studies, Charles was appointed Consular Agent for France in Tasmania. The term 'Consular Agent' was used only by France. The title, 'Consul', which all other nations gave to representatives in a similar position was applied by France only where the representative was a career diplomat and not of a local businessman.

This gave Ruth and Charles a mutual interest in things French. For Charles it involved a fair amount of work and responsibility. Hobart was used as the last port of call by the French expeditions to the Antarctic. There was a great deal he was able to do for the expedition members.

Ruth enjoyed her associations with French people, and even some of the social life, like the time they were piped aboard a French naval ship and treated to a beautiful lunch, preceded by champagne, not sherry as one might have expected. One of their friends at the time was Paul-Emile

Victor, the head of the French polar expeditions. He was an interesting and striking personality who liked getting his own way.

A trip to French Adelle Land on the *Thala Dan* in 1962 was part of Charles's recompense for the valuable service he had given. He was fascinated by the experience and enjoyed himself enormously.

Ruth was delighted for him, but during his absence, her tendency to be psychic gave her a frightening experience. She had a night of fear for him. It was absolutely agony, and she believes it was a night, which he told her about later, when there was a fierce gale. His cabin, which was separate from the main building, was rocking against the chains that anchored it to a rock. He was praying that the chains wouldn't break.

On his return, Ruth met him as the ship came into port. In good French style he reached out, took her hand and kissed it. She was still laughing when a reporter came to her and asked if she was Mrs Hand. Ruth regrets to this day that she immediately said 'Yes'. She feels that she should have hesitated and given him something to think about.

Charles was further rewarded for his services as Consular agent for France when the French Government awarded him the Chevalier of the Legion d' Honneur.

Ruth and Charles moved from Colebrookdale to a house in Balaka Street, Rosny Point, in July 1963. Joe, who by that time had virtually taken over the running of the property, moved with his family into the homestead.

Charles had hoped that they might be able to do the occasional entertaining in the new home, but this had not worked out as he envisaged. Ruth was busy with her studies and was not adept at preparing the sort of quick meal suitable for entertaining guests. She was accustomed to the more time consuming task of cooking solid meals for a family living on the land.

Chapter 2

Travel to Europe

In 1966 Ruth and Charles travelled to Europe, dividing most of their time between England and France. It was a wonderful trip in which they met many wonderful people and shared many of the fascinations of places steeped in history.

The travel added something to Ruth's studies, brought them to life: the statue of a fairy tale in Bremens Main Square: the town musicians, donkey cat and dog, bringing childhood stories to reality; so different from Hobart's statue of Benjamin Franklin. So it had been with the travel years ago on that train winding endlessly across the Rockies, up valleys with a sheer drop on one side and a sheer rise on the other, followed by the vast loneliness of the Prairies; geology and geography brought to life.

And the tropics, experienced once more. The word is meaningless until one has felt the heat, dust and humidity, smelled the flora and met the people typical of such conditions. Then returning home and discovering that Australia has her own smell, the burning eucalypts as the west is approached: the thrill of knowing you are home long before the sighting of land, a thrill that is missed by those who travel by air.

Sadly, their travel was marred by Charles's declining health. He seemed unable to recover fully from an operation for the removal of an ulcer a few months earlier, and became steadily more ill as time went on.

They sailed in the Messageries Maritimes ship, the *Velay*. They had a good trip, with the exception of a quite severe storm in the Mediterranean after sailing through the Suez. As they came towards the end of their voyage, they sailed past Stromboli, then past Elba and Corsica on their way to Genoa. In Genoa they were fascinated by the very old buildings, still in use, adapted to modern conditions.

They then sailed to Marseilles where they could see, high above the city, Notre Dame de la Gard, the beautiful great church which has guarded sailors for centuries.

They were met by Professor Ian Smith of the University of Tasmania, and his wife Betty. Formerly Ruth's university teacher, now a good friend, Ian took them to Aix en Provence where they went to see a small, historically interesting, church called Silvacane, built in the 12th century. Now, ironically, it is in danger of being demolished by the effects of aircraft breaking the sound barrier.

Unfortunately, what should have been a most pleasant arrival was marred by one of those hitches that are the horror of all travellers. Their bank had made a mistake and their letters of credit weren't workable. They would have to go to London and sort it all out, the French bank manager advised.

All their precious plans messed up! Ruth staged a turn - the angry, heart-broken female. The manager and Charles exchanged glances, and the manager relented. He got in touch with London and was able to sort the problem out.

They stayed for two weeks in Arles in a comfortable hotel that was a sixteenth century building with immensely thick walls. It was the sort of place that catered for French families of about the same standards as their own: people who like comfort, cleanliness and good service without any of the flashiness of the super tourist hotels. The service was in fact excellent. They were delighted by the crudites and the marvellous platters of cheeses. The crudites included all sorts of raw little bits and pieces, hors d'oeuvres, to have with every meal except breakfast. There would be about ten cheeses to choose from, and the middle aged waitress, probably observing that Charles wasn't well, would encourage him to take a little of each one.

In Arles they visited the great cathedral, Saint Trophime: ancient and splendid; suited to high occasions. Its cloisters at the back lay behind the patio of their hotel, separated from it by an arch. One paid to go into those cloisters, but where they were, they could look into the beautiful cloisters while sitting outside having afternoon tea.

In the evenings they enjoyed many a stroll around Arles among the ruins and to an ancient Roman arena now used for bullfighting.

They were there during the celebration of St Georges day. St George was the patron saint of the *Gardiens* of the Camargue, the tenders of

cattle on the farms. An image of Our Lady was carried to the old church on the hill, Notre dame de la Major, with its stones worn by generations of worshippers. People in traditional costume rode in the parade on their ponies, sisters and daughters riding pillion behind the men.

At nearby Les Baux they saw an interesting church which, like other buildings in the old town, is built into the living rock. It is very small and has lovely stained-glass windows donated by Prince Ranier of Monaco, completely modern, yet in harmony with the ancient church.

While in the Camargue, they visited a farm where the fences were ditches between the paddocks. Lucerne was turned into pellets to feed the stock, and sheep were housed in huge barns to shelter them from the beat of the midday sun. It is interesting to reflect that Tasmania, imagined by many mainland Australians to be fearfully cold, is closer to the equator than most of the Camargue.

Another visit was to Avignon, once a papal seat. Here, again, Ruth found the physical existence of something that hitherto had been words on paper: the broken bridge spanning about half the width of the Rhone; the subject of the song inevitably sung by students of French in Tasmania: 'Sur le pont d' Avignon'.

They also saw, on the wide steps at the end of the street leading to the *Palais des Papes*, Algerians looking desolate, no longer belonging to Algeria, nor yet to France.

From Arles they travelled by a train, up the Rhone valley and across to Paris. This was a wonderful way to travel, but would have been better had they not travelled in the crowded second class.

In Paris, a friend Jean-Pierre Suinot, one of the Expolaires (one who had served in Antarctica), lent them his flat in a suburb called Sartrouville while he and his wife stayed with their parents. This was most enjoyable. It was an ancient suburb quite close to Paris with a good train service, and good shopping.

Charles was interested to observe that the streets where they were, were not so clean and well kept as those in the next municipality. When he asked somebody why this was, he was informed that the other municipality had a Communist council. If they decided something needed doing, it was done without any argument, regardless of the cost to ratepayers!

While in Paris, they lunched with a M. Simonot, an Expolaire and former test pilot. He drove them around Paris which, in itself, was an

unforgettable experience; he was a masterly driver. He took them to the ancient church of St Severin. It has beautiful windows, and nearby, they were told, grapes were still being grown in the heart of Paris!

Notre Dame de Paris is beautiful. While there, Ruth prayed to the Holy Mother for the only time in her life. Sister Helena, a nun with whom she had been at university used to explain that catholics look upon the Holy Mother as the mother in the family who, when things are going bad with the children, will intercede for them. Ruth had troubles in her own family at the time and was glad to accept the comfort.

Ruth is not a Roman Catholic, nor even religious in the sense of being a conventional church-goer, but she has an intense belief in God - an almighty power - and in the soul as being the essence of the living being, rather than the material existence.

They did not do many of the things in Paris they would have liked because Charles was not well enough, but they continued to spend much of their time looking at the churches and cathedrals, buildings of such influence that Charles once said to Ruth that if they lived there they would have to be Catholics.

They visited Rambouillet, the French home of merino sheep, a short distance from Paris. The grass was incredibly lush and high. When shown some wool, Charles shattered the sheep-master's pride by telling him he didn't think much of it. He mended the man's feelings by putting on his spectacles and having another look. "Yes, it's beautiful wool," he lied. Fine wool can't be grown on lush grass.

Jean-Pierre Suinot drove them in his Citroen to see the Chartres cathedral. They saw its two spires, quite different from each other in height and style, peep up across the great plain of La Beauce, the granary of France, as they approached. Rabelais made a myth, saying that La Beauce was created when Gargantua's gigantic mare swept away with her tail the wasp-infested trees of the region. Said Gargantua: "Je trouve beauce". (I find this beautiful). Rabelais liked to play around with words.

Chartres is superb with its majestic spires and beautiful windows, celebrating the majesty and beauty of the Virgin. It is said that the foundations of the 'old tower' were laid before the thirteenth crusade in 1091. In 1194 fire destroyed most of the cathedral and it was rebuilt in the thirteenth century.

When it was time to leave for England, Jean-Pierre drove them to Le Havre, and from there they sailed to London.

In Le Havre they met a family in their caravan; Mother, Father and Daughter. They had a map on the side of the van showing their travels, over half the world it seemed! They must have had a lot of friends because they told about friends who had lent them flats and done other favours to help them on their way. Ruth and Charles were obliged to have a drink with them. They hoped the glasses were fairly clean; they spoke like educated people.

They sailed to England from Le Havre and after a little time in London took a trip to Cornwall so that Charles might see his old haunts and home in Falmouth.

During the short time they were in London they met Charles's cousin, Dorothy, a sad soul who was ever so glad to see them. Her father's work had been in the East. When her mother died out there, he kept the child with him, more or less cared for and, as she said, only half educated. She became a nanny, a happy enough life while she had her charges, but as they grew up and she grew older, her life fell apart. She hoped to come out to Tasmania to Ruth and Charles, but died of cancer soon after their visit.

Unlike the French trains, the one that took them to Cornwall was decidedly rough. Everything bounced around and they had to take care that they were not splashed by their drinks at dinner. The dinner was a poor one and, in keeping with the general standard of the time, their train ran late.

The companies that ran the fine railways of pre-war times, such as Great Western and Midland, had not been very profitable, and after World War II the services were nationalised. The nationalised railways, by comparison, are a disappointment.

On that journey, not far out of London, they observed a high density housing project comprising several large blocks, all facing the railway, one behind the other and uniform in shape and size. Ruth commented to Charles that it must be dreadfully dreary living in places like that. The only other passenger in their compartment, an Englishman, was most indignant at her remark.

There are in England still those long, grey streets of little stone houses where working people live - the mass housing developments of former times. These too looked rather depressing, but Ruth feels that people, by and large, would be happier in them than in high rise buildings. They had their gardens and there was more opportunity for contact between

neighbours; they could have a yarn over the garden fence. High rise, on the other hand, has an isolating effect.

They were driven about the streets and the narrow, sunken lanes of Falmouth by a kindly old hire car driver who invited them to his home to have a supper of his wife's Cornish pasties. The pasties were delectable. Ruth wrote to that woman for some time after, but she was rather frail, and when the correspondence ceased it could only be assumed that she had died.

Among the places they visited was the grave of Charles's mother. It was a sad moment; Charles had loved his mother, a beautiful and talented woman who died all too soon.

A lump on the top of a rise, in the town, Charles explained, was where a viking ship had been burned after its crew had been killed. Another spot they visited was a place called 'Bloody Corner', near Falmouth. On a stone was the inscription:

'Stop stranger, stop,
Near this spot lies the body
of King Hubba the Dane,
Who by King Alfred the Great was slain
In a bloody retreat.

Charles said that, in his youth, few locals would pass that corner at night.

They found a lovely little old church close to Lands End. It was scarcely bigger than the small house where Ruth now lives. It had a Lady chapel and on the ends of the wooden oak pews there were the most beautiful carvings including birds and beasts and plants. Charles sat there and meditated for a while. He did that in every one of the many churches and cathedrals they visited on their trip. It seemed to make him contented. Did he know his end was coming?

In recognition of Charles's standing in municipal government, they were entertained to an afternoon reception in Penzance. The ladies played and sang 'Waltzing Matilda' in their honour. That gave them great pleasure.

With Charles so ill, they were limited in what they could do in England, but one thing they did was to visit his cousin, Stuart Crispin, and his wife Marjorie, in Kew. While there, they visited the Kew Gardens. Marjorie is now dead but Stuart is still alive, living in a home for the elderly.

Their stay in England was more hurried than they had intended. There was the threat of a shipping strike and they wanted to make sure they were back in France in time to join their ship to sail to Australia. It was important that their return home should not be delayed; Charles was needed back in Tasmania for some important business relating to the Tasmanian Municipal Commission, a body, of which he was member, established to enquire into and report upon municipal boundaries.

While in Dunkirk waiting for their ship, Ruth and Charles continued their tour of the churches. One they found, Sainte Marie des Dunes, was very small and built on a site where workmen digging in the dunes in 1403 found a statue of the Virgin Mary. In consequence the little church was built there. In it there are plaques on the walls commemorating the various allied naval groups that were stationed there in World War I. Charles's group had been one of them. Ruth has a memento which she bought there, a silver anchor cross as a pendant.

One of the churches they saw had taken a bad battering in World War II. Ruth had seen the same church when she arrived there with her parents in 1929. That time there were still the signs of the battering it had taken in World War I!

Redevelopment of Dunkirk after the devastation of the war, they observed, was much better done than most they had seen. They had built red-brick residential blocks, each of only two storeys, with about eight to twelve units, imaginatively planned and landscaped.

When they joined their ship, the *Ventoux*, they sailed up the coast, to Antwerp, Bremen and Hamburg. They found the great Antwerp cathedral overpowering. It was over-decorated, yet it had to be conceded that it was magnificent. The stonework certainly was beautiful.

Hamburg, one of the ancient Hanseatic ports, was similar to Holland in that the land was very flat. Sometimes they were sailing higher than the land around them in a sort of elevated canal. Those not used to the scene would feel some apprehension; if the banks of the canal should ever break the surrounding beautiful farmlands and houses would be flooded.

In view of his position as the Chairman of the Clarence Municipal Commission, Charles made it his business wherever he went to call upon the local dignitaries. The Mayor of Hamburg showed Ruth and Charles pictures of what the city was like after the bombing of World War II. It was strange that despite that devastation there seemed to be no lingering resentment or bitterness. Hamburg was restored to a wonderful city.

From Hamburg they sailed south to La Rochelle. There they had a change of captains. The British Channel is reputed to be one of the most hazardous seaways in the world. It is often foggy, fearfully crowded and sandbanks abound inshore. It was too much for their captain. He had a nervous breakdown and had to be replaced.

At this stage Charles was becoming troubled by the motion of the ship, so they went ashore and later rejoined the ship in Marseilles. They had the best part of a week in La Rochelle. While there went across to the Ile de Re, the one-time haunt of the Three Musketeers. Charles was not at all sure what to think when he saw sullage running from a flat, through a downpipe and out into the gutter on the street.

Among the other fascinations in La Rochelle was the 'Street of Arcades'. On either side there are walks under ancient stone arcades, covering wide pavements. At another spot, around a lawn, was a great chain which, a municipal notice told visitors, had fastened Rabelais's Pantagruel, son of Gargantua, in his cot!

Charles, sick as he was, climbed the winding stone staircase to the top of one of the two great towers that stand at the entrance of a big double basin. These are the towers of St Nicholas and the Chain. When warships were sailing ships a great chain swung between the two, closing the port. Today it is filled with fishing boats and yachts.

From La Rochelle they went by train to Marseilles, via Bordeaux. This was a beautiful trip, remarkably smooth on a continuous rail. A glass of beer he could be left standing on the bar without sliding, rattling or spilling a drop.

Thought had been given to the interests of the tourists, what was more. On the way, they were able to look down with fascination on the medieval city of Carcassonne, of which the old part has been faithfully reconstructed. As the railway line curved around that area they had an excellent view of that authentic medieval redevelopment.

Unfortunately, with Charles unwell, they were not able to go to the town and look around. He had made a great effort to get around and see as much as he could, but they would have seen a great deal more had he not been so ill. He had started losing weight when they were in Arles. Ruth is inclined to think that he realised then that he hadn't much longer to live. He did not complain and probably made more demands on his limited strength than he should have.

The two long train trips in France revealed to Ruth and Charles what a wonderful country, geographically, it is: terrific gorges, lakes, high mountains, vast fields.

On the way home, on the *Ventoux*, they put in at Perim and later spent two or three days anchored at the Indian port of Cochin. The first thing to come to their notice in that port was a stack of tea chests on the wharf, marked 'Bushells'. Later they saw the Church of St Francis where Vasco da Gama was first buried, fourteen years before his body was taken back to Portugal.

It was intensely hot but this did not seem to worry Charles. Despite his ill-health he was able to meet local dignitaries and accept their hospitality. It amazed Ruth that he could get up early in the mornings and play deck tennis while she found the heat altogether too much. He was fighting his sickness all the way, she believes. His will power must have been colossal.

After Cochin they called in at Sri Lanka. There, the French consul entertained them and took them to see their splendid Zoo.

On arrival in Fremantle, to their very great pleasure, they were met by Michael who had been resident in Western Australia for some years.

They were informed by the customs officer in Fremantle that a small penguin, which had been mummified in the Antarctic and given to them in Paris by Jean-Pierre Suinot, could not be taken into the country because of the possibility of its carrying disease. Seeing that they were upset, and probably noticing that Charles was not a well man, that good man took it away, fumigated it and gave it back to them the next day, duly passed through customs.

By this time the movement of the ship was becoming too much for Charles. The mischance of rough weather on the Great Australian Bight would have been intolerable, so they left the ship and crossed the continent by train.

They spent the night in Perth and had a beautiful dinner with Michael. It was the last good dinner Charles ever had. Later in the night he had a fearful attack of projectile vomiting.

Ruth left Charles in Melbourne and went to Sydney to see Pauline and Rose who were there at that time. Charles felt that he couldn't endure any more travelling and went straight home to Tasmania.

Chapter 3

Charles's Death

Soon after arriving home, Charles was operated on again and found to have cancer of the stomach. His death was imminent.

When the news came that he hadn't long to live Ruth was shattered. She couldn't bare to think of him being in a hospital, visited ever so often but often alone. During those last tense and painful weeks she kept him with her at their home in Rosny Point.

Rose, a trained nurse of long experience, gave up a good job on the mainland and returned home to nurse him to the end. This was a blessing to Ruth. It made a great difference to have Rose there to give him his injections and tend to his other needs, to say nothing of the fact that it was a day and night task.

Charles died bravely. Although desperately ill, one of the last things he did for Ruth before becoming bedridden was to make her bed for her each morning while she was in the bathroom. Almost to the last day, he took an interest in what was going on about him, friends, family and municipal affairs. Weak as he was, was able to make conversation, and to keep his sense of humour, repeatedly making jokes, some of them quite bad.

Once, while his family stood around him, mute and miserable, he said, "It's just like Dr Kildair, isn't it?" He could only speak in a whisper, but he was grinning.

It was a distressing illness; a time of vain hope for some miracle cure but of increasing debility. There was almost nothing he could keep down, but one thing he could take, in small quantities, was champagne; a meagre remission from his suffering.

Another mercy was receiving the news before he died that Ruth had gained her Honours, upper second class in French. He had been most anxious for her to have that success. It was not until the following year,

several months after his death, that the degree was conferred. The pleasure of that occasion would have been more complete for Ruth had he been there to share it, as he had been when her Bachelor's degree was conferred, but that was not so important. It was his pride in knowing of her achievement that really mattered.

He loved his family dearly, and had always been sad for any of them who made mistakes, but neither he nor Ruth ever saw that they had fallen short in their upbringing. Only in later years did Ruth find herself believing that that was not always so. Her daughter Pauline consoled her, remarking that they all seemed to have done pretty well, nevertheless.

On his last Christmas, after the family gathering had dispersed, and the last of them had gone, Charles said to Ruth, "They're a great crowd, aren't they."

For Charles, life had never been easy. In truth, he had never wanted it to be. Brought up to impose high standards and great demands upon himself, he remained like that to the end; harsh upon himself as he could be to others; the victim of the rigours of his youth performing a duty that would have been cruelly taxing to many a mature man.

For all that, it is the sensitivity and kindness of the real man underneath the tough exterior that is remembered by those who knew him well: the man who loved poetry; who cared deeply for his children; who could be moved by the beauty of a piece of music; who could sketch with a delicate, exquisite sense of line; whose wife had his constant, unflinching affection.

It had been a good marriage, Ruth reflects, indeed a wonderful one, although never easy. Charles had at first thought her a spoiled brat (that assumption of the superiority of her class) and often cut her down to size, but thanks to the severity of her upbringing, it was treatment she could endure.

Like all people, Charles had his blind spots. He liked good clothes, and could not see that Ruth would be over-dressed if she wore the sort of thing that would be suitable for afternoon shopping in Melbourne she would be over-dressed in Hobart in the morning. He could not envisage her plans for a garden. Her efforts to create a belt of bright, flowering shrubs between the house and the pine trees at the end of the lane, at Colebrookdale, were always frustrated. Those shrubs were inevitably destroyed by mowing.

He was extremely punctual and could not tolerate late rising. As a

meagre concession, on Sundays, they would sneak an extra half hour, over morning tea, in bed. He was a light sleeper, but Ruth, often tired, slept heavily. She kept an alarm clock on the chest of drawers where she couldn't reach it from the bed. She would have to leap out and switch off the alarm with a pounding heart. It had to be done. His breakfast had to be ready when he had finished feeding the horses, cleaning the stables and milking the cows; before starting his day's work in the paddocks.

Chapter 4

Emily's Death

Emily died in 1974. It had been a long life, burdened with more than one person's share of unhappiness. Although by nature cheerful, generous and kind, she was permanently embittered by the memory of her childhood poverty. Later in life, always at the wrong time and in front of the wrong people because she was hurt, she would recount memories of her poverty. Even with friends she was inclined to be quarrelsome, so touchy did she become.

At the basis of the bitterness was the social stigma, more than the actual deprivation associated with the poverty. This was reflected in an incident when Ruth was accompanied by her mother at a child welfare clinic, which she attended with one of her babies. While they sat together in the waiting room Emily said, audibly, "This isn't the place for you, my dear." That embarrassing remark was induced by the belief that only the poor were incompetent and didn't know how to look after children. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century it was a dreadful disgrace to be poor. On that reasoning, Emily had been brought up in circumstances of shame.

The other cause of Emily's unhappiness was the life style imposed upon her in her marriage to a man who never could get far enough away from civilisation. Essentially a conventional person, Emily would have preferred to live somewhere nearer to a city so that she could visit friends, go shopping or go to the cinema as she pleased. Stanley despised that kind of life. He was inclined to say that town people - townies, he called them - didn't understand a thing worth knowing! In consequence, Emily spent most of her married life living in some degree of isolation.

Occasionally, when her depression got the better of her, she would drink too much. At these times, Stanley was infinitely patient and in time would bring her back to her normal calm.

Being young, Ruth was less understanding. She hated her mother's lapses, and once, in her disgust, asked her father why he didn't leave her.

But that was something Stanley could never have done. His affection for Emily held strong, and in the final reckoning, he had a rigid sense of duty.

He told Ruth of the difficult childhood and youth Emily had endured. He believed, furthermore, perhaps less logically, that her tendency to fly to brandy in times of stress, stemmed from the time of Ruth's birth when the midwife who attended her gave her brandy to ease the pain.

For all this, Emily was a woman of fine character: kindly and thoughtful, particularly towards those less fortunate than herself; resourceful and strong willed in a crisis; an optimistic fighter in times of distress and anxiety; unshakeable in her sense of devotion and duty as a wife and mother.

"Don't be chicken-hearted," she would say to Ruth. "Stand on your own two feet and cope." And she would practice what she preached.

When Ruth got up at six o'clock to study for her matriculation, Emily would be up before her, lighting a fire in her den and making her a cup of tea. When either Stanley or Ruth were sick she nursed them magnificently. Nothing was too much trouble for somebody who was sick.

One night, when Stanley had gone into Ruth's room to say 'goodnight', he chanced to see an interesting book on top of a chest of drawers. He began to read it, and became so absorbed that he stood there, in front of an open window, reading until he had almost finished it, long after Ruth had gone off to sleep. In consequence, he got a bad cold which developed into double pneumonia.

He was dreadfully ill, but with her usual stoicism Emily nursed him through it. She kept his window open but there was always a blazing fire in his room. One night the heat of the fire became too much. The wooden mantelpiece scorched and caught light. Emily took one end and made Ruth take the other. "Don't stand about. Get hold of your end and pull!" she cried.

Together, they yanked it away from the wall, carried it out through the door and threw it onto the gravel drive. Emily was not one to fiddle about in a crisis!

Emily had been brought up according to the rules of her mother's day, as regarded a husband: the house should be warm and welcoming when he came in at evening, his slippers waiting for him. Meals should be what he liked, so they never had pork or pumkin, but lots of vegetable marrows.

Often bored and lonely, and sometimes quarrelling with him, Emily stuck to her duty, and she never lost her affection for him. Nor did he lose his affection for her. She would call him Stannums and he would call her Mumsiel

Indicative of Emily's devotion is an incident which occurred long after Stanley's death while she was living in a nursing home. She had influenza and had become delirious. She kept on saying: "Where is Mr Hodgson's hot breakfast? He likes a hot breakfast and it hasn't been brought yet." She was still looking after her husband.

Stanley was not an easy man to bend once he had made up his mind, but with persistence she could sometimes get her own way. After they had been married for the best part of twenty years, Emily decided that she wanted him to give her a new engagement ring. Stanley did not believe in jewellery in any form and an argument ensued which went on for ages. Emily knew how to nag, and in the end she won. She was not being unreasonable, after all; Stanley's income at the time, between eighteen hundred and two thousand pounds, was more than abundant for the 1920's.

Ruth still has both rings, but particularly likes the earlier one which she wears from time to time. It is set with a ruby, surrounded by diamond chips.

Emily's love for Ruth was strong but possessive; perhaps another legacy of her own bleak childhood. She had, nevertheless, a tremendous pride in anything Ruth achieved, particularly by way of study. Once, in later years, she addressed a letter: Mrs R. Hand B. A. Not quite the thing to do, but it expressed her pride.

Emily had no fondness for books, but with characteristic sensitivity, gave Ruth her copy of Shakespeare's works, with a loving inscription. It was the best available in Hobart.

Ruth could never get really close to her mother. Once in her late teens, Ruth asked her quite casually if she couldn't be her pal. Emily was furious. That was a word to use to school friends, not to her parents. Another rift between them arose as a consequence of Emily's rather mercenary character. Ruth was quoting from a poem about autumn leaves lying on the ground in all their vivid colours. The leaves were described as ruinous gold. Emily didn't understand and took it quite literally. Gold to her was good hard cash. You looked after it and it wasn't ruinous!

Whatever Emily did she did well. She ran her house beautifully and had a genius for turning raw country girls into natty little parlour maids, properly dressed for their work and thoroughly competent in the way they went about it. Several of the cooks they engaged were astonished to find that their standards did not suit her. One had worked in a good hotel and was startled to be told that her standards would not do!

Emily was herself a good cook. At plain cooking in the English style she excelled. Her meat, vegetables and puddings were always delectable. Nobody ever cooked poultry better than she.

From time to time the Hodgsons would find themselves without maids. They would suddenly leave for one reason or another - as often as not the loneliness - and the work would be done by Emily and Ruth. On those occasions, Emily was a stern taskmaster. She did the cooking, but Ruth had to prepare the vegetables, do all the housework and the washing up. Only the laundry, which was done by a local woman, was she spared. Ruth believes that this did her no harm. The experience certainly stood her in good stead later, when she was married.

Years later, after Stanley's death, Emily admitted to Ruth that she would have been a great deal happier if she had always had to do her own work. She seemed to thoroughly enjoy herself during spring cleaning, supervising and attending to those parts of the task that needed her special care, such as cleaning precious ornaments. She would set about furniture polishing with a will!

Among the many domestic skills Ruth learned from her mother were proper methods of hygiene. Milk vessels, for example, should be washed up first, before anything else was put in the water, and never dried but rinsed in hot water. Hands should be carefully washed before handling any food. Drains should be kept clean for fear of dyptherial! These were skills handed down from generation to generation.

Emily was strong on economy. She never stinted her husband nor indeed in any of the catering for the house, not even the servants to whom she could be quite generous, but she was quick to call a halt to waste or extravagance. Ruth liked to make shortbread, which needed lots of butter. Emily liked eating it but she would say, "It's all very well if you've got the butter!"

Stanley once grew a superabundance of cucumbers. Emily tried them with white sauce and they were very good. Waste not, want not, was her principal, even though they were well off.

Ruth used to find Australian shoes too narrow for her. She would buy herself 'Bally' shoes which were made in Switzerland and were a shape that suited her foot, but at three guineas they were expensive. "It's all very well if you've got the money!" Emily would say. Yet by nature she was not ungenerous. Whenever Emily went shopping in Hobart she would always buy Ruth something nice to wear. A good manager, never extravagant but never miserly.

A great blessing in Emily's life was her sustained affection for her mother-in-law. Many was the time she put pen and note paper in front of Stanley and demand that he write to his mother.

"Stanley, you haven't written to your poor mother for three months, and she writes to you regularly," Ruth recalls her saying. "You will sit down and write to her now."

Stanley did as he was told.

Always the practical one, Emily was the same with the bills. Stanley was inclined to shove them into a drawer and forget them, but every month Emily would get out all that were three months old, present him with his cheque book and pen and see that he paid them. Stanley never paid bills that he had had for less than three months. He did not see that he should give a firm the benefit of 'cash' by paying them in less than three months. Had it not been for Emily his creditors would have waited even longer.

Emily's aesthetic tastes were simple. She loved trees and flowers but didn't like gardening. She knitted a lot and was skilful at sewing. She enjoyed happy music and liked to play her pianola. Ruth had also known her to play the occasional few notes on the piano. She remembered a few pieces she had learned when she was young and played them unflinching. At some time she must have been able to play quite nicely, but sheer poverty would have prevented the development of any such talent. Stanley, moreover, with his traditional views about a woman's lot in life, did nothing to help.

She was always careful about her appearance. She would brush her long hair meticulously with her good tortoiseshell or silver-backed brushes, then braid it round her head. Small curling pins and occasionally curling tongs were used to give errant bits a crinkle. She used cosmetics sparingly: a little powder and something to give her a little colour. Stanley disapproved.

Hats suited her, but she was afraid of them. She had one that was cherry red and three cornered. Ruth loved it, and Stanley loved it, but Emily decided that it was too stylish and gave it away.

In some ways Emily was quite vain. She would not wear her spectacles if it could be avoided. It was a disgrace to need them, she thought, and it was a disgrace to need false teeth, although she had some herself!

Yet there were elements of vain behaviour that disgusted her. Ruth was with her in a London shop in 1930, and standing beside them was a woman mollycoddling her much-pampered pekinese, clad in its winter top coat.

"She ought to be made to have a baby!" Emily declared in an audible stage whisper, causing Ruth acute embarrassment, and the woman to give her a murderous look.

Her tastes in decor were neither garish nor dreary, but quietly warm and harmonious. Both she and Stanley liked light coloured walls. Walls papered red or brown at Sunnybank were quickly changed to something light and plain. At Fair Lea they had the living room walls painted off-white and the bedrooms in soft pastels.

Emily loved all children. She always spoke to them and loved to watch them going home from school. She liked to recall one who, when asked whose little girl she was, replied, "I'm Mummy's little girl."

Emily's dislike for Charles was never so intense as her adoration for young Charles. In her later years she practically lived for her first born grandson. When young Charles married, she resented his wife Betty and would say dreadfully unkind things to her, despite Betty being persistently kind and generous towards her. Terence Butler once told Stanley that this over-possessiveness was due to her unconscious frustration at not having had more children of her own. That was something Emily had avoided because she had had a difficult time giving birth to Ruth, and had a fear of pain.

Emily was by nature a timid woman but could be brave when things went wrong. When, as an old woman, she was travelling to England alone, she had a two-berth cabin to herself. The upper berth was hooked back against the bulkhead, but one day it broke loose, came down and trapped her in a sort of triangle. She could not get out and could not reach the bell. She was scared stiff, but she made no fuss. She kept her head and managed to extricate herself from her predicament.

Emily was a widow for nearly twenty years. For the greater part of that time she was quite happy, living in various hotels and taking several trips to England, once with young Charles. In Hobart she could do the sorts of things she enjoyed, window shopping and the like. During this time, however, she was inclined to give vent to anger against Charles, and this would be directed at Ruth whenever she paid her a visit. It became too much; the moment it started Ruth would get up and go.

In all her long life Emily had rarely known what it was to be ill. She had probably never had a doctor attend her more than three times in her life. On one of her later trips to England she had a tumor removed from one of her breasts. This was done under local anaesthetic; she refused a general anaesthetic.

It was a bitter blow to her when she fell and broke a hip, after which she was confined to life in a nursing home. It was not a life that suited her. She became quarrelsome towards the other patients, particularly those to whom she felt superior. Eventually the staff decided that there had been enough unpleasantness during mealtimes and she was asked to keep to her room.

Typical of her character, she said it was a great pity to have been so afflicted when she was only eighty five. She later expressed regret that she had not faced up to the pain and humiliation of learning to walk with a cane.

Never much of a reader she would sit and meditate upon things of the past, sometimes pleasant things and sometimes not. Depending upon what it was, her mood of the day would be decided.

Finally, quietly accepting her lot, she died, aged ninety two.

Chapter 5

Making a Life of Her Own

With Charles gone, Ruth was desolate. She went back to work at Fahan School but morning and night she fretted. She must have cried every day for a year. It was a blessing that during that time she had the task of transferring the school's library to new premises. It was hard, demanding work, both physically and mentally. It kept her mind from her sorrow.

Another consolation was the support of her friend, Molly Taylor. Molly's home, always open to her, became her harbour. As her one really close friend, Molly was her only real confidant.

While doing the work of setting up the new library, Ruth was studying to become a Librarian. As she learned in her lectures she put that knowledge into practice in the same week in her work. It was a good, thorough way to learn. When she retired, the Librarian who took over her job was delighted to find that everything had been done.

The school sent Ruth to the Librarians' Association Conference in Adelaide, in 1967. The break was a blessing, and the seminars, on all aspects of librarianship, were a great help to her in her work. Upon her return, she was able to instruct the school's architect in the needs of a school library.

As Honorary Librarian of the Lapidary Club, Ruth is, to this day, a retired member of the L.A.A., and gets its newsletter.

The role of Librarian kept her in employment for another six years. Having that work greatly eased the plight of widowhood. The money had been welcome, but far more important was the fact of being busy and the constant association with other people.

Ruth retired in 1972 at the age of sixty six. She was asked if she would stay on, but declined. There were other things she wanted to do, like reading science and early history, and she had come to accept that there were limits as to how much she could disperse her energies.

Nevertheless, she left with some regret. She had been happy at Fahan. She liked the work and she liked the staffroom friendliness. They all seemed close to each other. She is still friendly with four of those she worked with there.

At the school's 50th anniversary dinner, in 1975, Ruth was asked to propose the toast to the co-founder and former principal, Miss Travers, because she had known her longer than anybody else connected with the school they could find. Ruth had known her since she was ten, in fact. She took a lot of trouble over that speech and it went down well.

Ruth remained at Balaka Street for another four years after Charles's death. She had quite liked that house but it had too many unhappy memories. She still imagined she could hear him walking along the balcony. It would be better to get out and start a new life of her own. She decided to build a house at Lauderdale and live near the beach.

She had once stayed there with Charles for a week in a house rented from a friend, and they had loved it. Towards the end of his life, Charles would get Michael to drive him there so that he could paddle in the sea.

She moved into a flat in Howrah where she stayed for six months while her house was being built. Pauline was living with her at the time and it was a relief not to be alone. It was one of block of six units, rather cut off from the street. One night Pauline caught a young man looking in, under the curtain which didn't quite reach the floor. She told him to buzz off and not come back. Had Ruth been alone the intruder could well have noticed the fact and broken in. Unnerving for an elderly woman.

Ruth moved into her new house on July 10, 1970. It was a good move. She will never stop missing Charles but her grief was behind her and she was able to shape her life in the way that she wanted. The years that have followed have been bliss. She has the beach, the clear air, her jungle-garden and the space she needs to pursue her hobbies.

In 1970 the garden was little more than a sandy waste. It has since been built to the point where pretty well anything will grow, with truckloads of heavy black soil brought to her by Joe from Colebrookdale, and plenty of compost over the years. As it is now, built up over the years, that garden reflects her character, a luxuriant bourgeoning of anything, love of life, orderly in a disorderly sort of way.

The need for involvement in the world about her continued into her retirement. She felt the need of something to do, and it would be something to do with geology, she decided. At that stage, the only thing

relating rocks available and possible for her to do was lapidary.

Accordingly, she joined the Lapidary Club and has been a member ever since.

The noise of as many as three saws and ten or eleven electric motors linked to twenty six grinding and polishing wheels buzzing away in the back room was never a deterrent. She likes that sort of hum of industry; it reminds her of the shearing sheds where she toiled years ago.

Ruth's interest, however, was not so much in polishing-up as in finding the rocks. She regrets that she is no longer able to go on club excursions or to tramp about the hills of Colebrookdale, rock hunting, as she once did. Simple a thing though it may seem, one of the great thrills of her life stemmed from one of those walks. Accompanied by John, she climbed Gunns Sugar Loaf, a tall hill on the western boundary of Colebrookdale. At the top she found a piece of basalt which she took to the Mines Department, carefully identifying on a map the spot where she found it. In consequence, the existence of a previously unknown volcanic core was confirmed.

Ruth has been the club's librarian since about 1974, looking after their special library of about four hundred books. In recognition of this work she has been made a life member, which is a great honour because they don't have many life members.

In 1973 Ruth joined an Adult Education drawing class under a teacher called Lutz Presser. This was drawing as a preliminary to painting, and painting remains one of her continued interests. She now is a member of a group called Colour Circle, and paints in bold, dramatic style, with emphasis on colour and symbolism. Upon seeing her work for the first time, artists and critics have sometimes been openly incredulous, finding it difficult to relate such work to an artist who is so elderly and had started painting late in life.

Her work is inclined to be conspicuous alongside the less adventurous, representational work of most of her friends. A visiting critic, Tasmanian artist John Traynor, recently gave her an understanding criticism for a semi-abstract, architectural scene. That work was even more warmly praised by the nineteen year old son of one of the members. As a young man he could relate to the up and going spirit with which it had been painted.

For all the boldness of her work, however, there is in it an element of inhibition stemming she believes from the still-present influence of her

father whose views about art were conventional and who would tolerate nothing that was not strictly representational. Had she started earlier in life this might have been overcome, but the inhibitions of a lifetime are difficult to shake.

Clubs and classes have been a valuable source of human communication for Ruth, outside the family. Dear to her though her family is, she still needs, just as she has needed from the time she was very young, the enrichment of association with other people. These are not intimate friendships, but strong friendships, nevertheless. As with those stoic, hard-working people of Campania, many years earlier, she values these associations because there is no status rivalry and they are able to enjoy conversation and companionship born of similar values and interests.

Books remain an absorbing interest. She reads extensively, both for entertainment and to further her knowledge in a wide range of subjects. One of her great pleasures is browsing around bookshops and occasionally finding a fascinating book to buy.

The last of Ruth's formal education came in her eightieth year. She studied level II Geology at the Rosny Matriculation College and got a credit.

Another of Ruth's great loves is a good conversation. She likes meeting interesting people but does not always make a good fist of it. By nature a loner, she does not mix and make friends easily. The friendships she has made among scholarly and interesting people, therefore, are greatly prized.

In 1987 Ruth was invited to attend a Red Cross birthday celebration in Campania. She was happy, if scared, to be asked to give a short talk on changes over the years. She based the talk on the changes in domestic and school life, and on the escapades of her sons. The speech was a howling success! It was a happy occasion for Ruth to be among her old friends once again.

Conversation with members of her family has long been an important part of her life. Widely experienced and read, she is able to relish in conversation with one or another of her sons and daughters in their particular areas of interest. This now extends to grandchildren.

Essential to Ruth's way of life is the fact that she is still able to drive. Her driving style is cautious but in no way timid, reflecting the thoroughly imbued skills she acquired when she was young, and the

strength of her own constitution in that those skills are still efficiently applied.

Chapter 6

The family

In 1974, Michael graduated at the University of Western Australia with the degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Economic Geography. His thesis was on salinity and the effects of wood-chipping.

Ruth went to Perth for the occasion. A bridge near Kalgoorlie had been destroyed by flood so she had to cross the continent by air instead of rail. Despite her dislike of flying, she found the journey interesting. There was the mouth of the Murray, and the coastline in the Bight, at the South Australia-Western Australia border, that looked just like pastry that the cook had been cutting with a pastry cutter. It intrigued her to see an oil rig well out in the Bight, sitting there, a tiny, remote island.

When it was time to return, the damaged bridge had been replaced by a temporary one and rail traffic had resumed. The airline allowed her to transmute her air ticket into a rail ticket. This journey was interesting too. There were the usual things to do like counting the number of trucks on other trains as they passed, and the unusual, like observing the raging torrent of the flooded river as they crept across on the temporary bridge that saved her from the horror of having to fly. It was fascinating to think that there was usually no river there at all. Such is the nature of rivers in inland Australia.

When they got to Kalgoorlie, Ruth realised she had put a suitcase that she needed with her in the luggage van. She had to climb a long, long way down to the very low platform and then up into the luggage van where she would identify her bag. It took a porter behind and two in front to get her up!

On her way home, she went to Canberra to see various members of her family, and then to Sydney where she called on Mary Corvan.

Michael, formerly a high school teacher, now Senior Goldroom Foreman with a mining company in the Northern Territory, is the only

member of Ruth's family not to have married, although he was once engaged relatively late in life.

Some of the family still live in Tasmania while others have gone interstate. Charles, John, Joe, Robert and Rose are the ones who have stayed. Charles is a rural real estate salesman, John a retired State public servant, Joe a farmer with other business interests, Robert a senior partner in a large firm of solicitors and Rose a geriatric nurse. Rose's husband, Denis, is a ship's radio officer.

Michael lives where he works in the Northern Territory, and also ^{is provided with} ~~has~~ a house in Alice Springs. Mary and her husband, Geoffrey Kelly, are in Canberra. Mary is a secretary and Geoffrey a senior public servant. Peter, who is Deputy Director of Health and Community Welfare for the State of Queensland, is in Brisbane. Pauline and her husband, Denis Coleman, also live in Brisbane, having recently moved there from the Northern Territory. Pauline works in business and Denis is an insurance assessor and investigator.

The only marriage not to succeed was Peter's. He is now separated from his wife Jennifer. The family does not take sides in the matter; there is no side to take; it is simply a matter of incompatibility without the lingering nastiness that is so often part of these affairs. Their two children have stayed with their mother in their home in Canberra while Peter, gives them generous support. Both children spend their holidays with him.

Ruth's relations with her sons and daughters in-law have been good. She has always taken the view that it is her job to get to know them and to understand them. They must have excellent qualities, she has decided, otherwise her children would not have married them. Without exception, she has found those qualities and likes them all very much. She often finds herself in sympathy with them; having known their spouses since the day they were born she knows exactly what they have to put up with.

At the time of writing she has twenty three grandchildren, but to her disappointment, no great grandchildren. Not yet. It is not so much that she is eager to become a great grandmother as a perverse desire to be the mother of a grandparent.

It is a big family, nevertheless, and Ruth spares no effort to keep in touch with them all, phoning, writing and where possible, exchanging visits. Mainly through her efforts, there is a constant flow of family news. In return, Ruth receives their constant care and affection. The lack of

being wanted by children and grandchildren, Ruth believes, is the saddest thing that can happen in old age.

Ruth is proud of the fact that in all her family, herself included, twelve have completed university and other high level tertiary courses, and three are still studying at that level. Whether university graduates or not, all who are now adults seem to have been able to make good careers, including, banking, building, geology, the restaurant business, accountancy, marketing, languages, marine biology, computer programming, radio, army, telecommunications and economics!

It is her good fortune that they are a capable lot with such a wide variety of skills. There is usually one or another who can help her with whatever need might arise: repairs to the house, business or legal matters to be sorted out, a reference in the fields of science or history to be found, health problems, even the writing of her life story.

Two of the happiest events for Ruth, in later life, were the celebrations of her seventieth and eightieth birthdays, on the first occasion at Robert's house in Kingston and on the latter at Colebrookdale. Each time she was feted in potent expression of the affection in which she is held. Each time Ruth tried to make a speech and each time she wept. Nobody minded. Some joked about it; one asked her stop before he started too! They know that she is a person above mere melodrama; a person of strong emotions, who feels deeply, and nothing arouses in her deeper feeling than the love of her own family.

Chapter 7

Reflections

Moral Outlook

During her long life Ruth has seen and experienced an awesome array of changes, touching every facet of life. She reflects upon those changes. Some please her and others do not. Some she finds exciting, some horrifying, others depressing. Her thoughts are often for the young: what they are doing, what they are thinking, how their values and attitudes have changed.

There is great fear among the young today of nuclear destruction, she observes. Such fears are dulled by acceptance as we get older, but when we recall our fears as young people we understand the youth of today.

She had such fears as a child: of Russian anarchists, and later, when in her teens, at the time of the Russian revolution. Australia too seemed to be on the brink of revolution. There were awful political upheavals. People were storing arms in cellars, preparing for the day when the workers would rise against the rest. Ruth was afraid, not for her life, but for all the beautiful things that would be destroyed in the rioting: things in her own home such as the garden, books and artworks.

To this day, when she hears of rioting, she is devastated. There is death in the streets and this is terrible enough, but when fine paintings, fine buildings and other beautiful creations - the better part of man's achievement, which endure far beyond the span of any single lifetime - are destroyed, it really hurts her.

Ruth worries about what is happening to our children and teenagers. In her young day they were always accompanied by adults, whatever they they were doing. That might have been overdone, but it troubles her that they are now left to themselves so much, sometimes at parties until all hours of the night. Except in the worst possible environments, like back-street slums, it simply couldn't have happened as it does today that

children could go on wild drinking sprees and be found next morning vomiting and intoxicated on a beach.

Her feeling is one of worry, but not despair. There are still sound standards of behaviour and morality among the young. One of her granddaughters once remarked to her that all of Hobart's high schools have problems of drink and drugs, but there is never any mistaking the people who are concerned in these things, and those people keep to themselves in their own groups. Those who don't want to join them have no need at all to become involved. Any who get tangled up in drink and drugs bring it upon themselves.

In all, Ruth has great faith in the young. The weak or bad ones stand out but the fine majority are taken for granted. Considering the difficult world in which they live, they handle their problems well.

Ruth holds no brief for the prudish Victorian attitudes still existing when she was young: such absurdities as the attitude of Ruth's grandmother, Anne, during her last pregnancy. Ten years had passed since her previous pregnancy, and she once told Ruth how bitterly ashamed she had been at the time. Her son George was soon to return home from Cambridge and she thought it was dreadful to have her young, grown-up son see her in that condition!

In those days a woman couldn't be seen walking in broad daylight if she was pregnant. She would wait until it was dusk, when her condition was less likely to be observed.

The discarding of that silly taboo, and many other changes, Ruth has welcomed and enjoyed. She enjoys the informality that now exists between the sexes and generations, and approves the greater freedom the young have to think and act for themselves. Even when she was in her teens her father didn't like her to read the newspaper - there were things in it that wouldn't have been good for her! These day children of all ages read the lot and she cannot believe that it hurts them.

Ruth regrets, however, the sexual permissiveness of modern generations. There has always been immorality, but in days gone by there were always some constraints, unlike today where it is flaunted.

She worries about the incidence of homosexuality in modern society. In any community there will always be those natural homosexuals, she understands, and what they do in their private lives is their business. She is disturbed, however, that so many others seem to be drifting into this kind of life; a form of decadence and not the behaviour of decent human

beings. Even more disturbing, she finds, is the way that it is publicised, almost praised, and that community support is expected for groups who identify with such deviant behaviour. The effect on community values will be devastating unless the shift from healthy values is halted.

As a keen reader of medieval history, Ruth sees the same things happening now as happened then. As somebody once said, history doesn't repeat itself, but men do. They still do the same things, good and bad. Like the medieval people, we are hit by such horrors as wars and, what is in effect, plagues. Through ignorance, lack of wisdom and lack of willingness to accept the truth, we persist in bringing these things on ourselves.

Social Conventions

Ruth dislikes the changes in the rules relating to hospitality. In the time of her youth it was absolutely obligatory to write a short note of thanks for any hospitality received. This is still quite correct, but since World War II has become steadily less usual. These days it is more commonly a phone call, and that is all right, but too often it is nothing.

She regrets the passing of the custom of calling on a newcomer to a district. You called on them and left a card. They then returned the call. You might call again if you wished to continue the association. They, in turn, could do the same. This way, the newcomer met people, and people found those who shared the same interests.

One change for the better is the modern convention that one should try to keep slim. Early in the century hearty eating and plenty of fattening food was good style. To be big and fat and hearty was to be a fine figure of a man, in the best of health. In truth such people were probably quite ill.

As a believer in the worth of human beings no matter what their walk of life, Ruth is gladdened by the increasing opportunities for education. Universities, before World War II, were usually for the well-to-do. Today there are opportunities for everybody, and there is far less snobbism. There was a great deal of snobbism early in the century, but this was not always accompanied by selectivity. The children of today are

becoming more selective and less snobbish. They choose the friends they think are suitable for friends without much thought for social status.

When Ruth was a girl in England it simply wasn't done to talk, conversationally, to shop assistants. For a shop assistant to have called a customer 'Dear', 'Duck' or 'Dearie' instead of 'Madam' or 'Ma'am' would have been considered appalling in those earlier times. To have been addressed in such a familiar manner would have resulted in the customer's immediate decision to shop elsewhere. Even though she likes to communicate with those who serve her, and does not care for stiff formality, Ruth finds such familiarity amusing.

Nevertheless, Ruth finds Australia attitudes towards such things to be more in touch with reality than in England where too often things are either 'done' or 'not done' for no apparently useful reason. It pays handsomely, she knows, to be friendly with everybody. A friendly, reassuring word to a harried shop assistant can bring a bright smile and a sudden surge of excellent service.

This is not to say, however, that people in Australia are never guilty of taking for granted, even bullying, those who wait on them at tables or serve them at counters, but this is more a matter of thoughtlessness than observance of some out-moded convention.

There have been great changes, she has observed, in attitudes to hygiene. When she was a child in England, the butchers would hang their meat in open windows. Shutters would be raised in the morning and the meat would be open to the street. There was no problem with flies and, with so much less traffic; far less fumes and dust. Nevertheless, it seems strange to people who are used to the modern and steadily increasing practice of pre-wrapping meat.

A far more potent commentary on changing attitudes to hygiene is the fact that dentists now wear masks and gloves. Their caution is understandable. As in the past when terrible epidemics made their fearful impacts on the world's history, we have our epidemics of today: AIDS and hepatitis B.

Clothes

As with other facets of changing social outlook, Ruth has observed in the fashions of people's clothes changes for both the better and the worse, but mostly the better. The casual clothes of today are much nicer than the confining and restrictive apparel early in the century.

Today it is no longer mandatory for a woman to wear a corset, and on medical advice Ruth no longer wears them herself. Women once always wore gloves in town, but now they are hardly ever seen. It is not even a must any more to wear a hat in church. All a far cry from fashions, as late as 1910 - in her own lifetime - when women wore ankle length skirts with tight waists, and blouses with stock collars - buttoned right up to the chin - when playing tennis!

Ruth does not necessarily condemn the odd dress styles of modern youth, but she deplores ugliness and lack of standards. Hair may be long, but long hair that is unbrushed or unwashed is unacceptable. A shirt out over slacks is all right, but not if there is coat over it. The line of the shirt below the coat is ugly. She is not averse to criticising anything that seems ugly or unharmonious in her own grandchildren's clothes.

She is particularly displeased that leather footwear is now financially out of the question for most young people, and that canvas shoes are commonly worn. She feels that good, strong leather is essential to healthy feet, particularly in wet weather. But she is a poor one to find fault in others, she confesses; she who has a maladjustment of the instep because of a fad she once had for spike heels.

As Stanley would have done, Ruth laments the fact that this is a throw-away era. When she lived in England if an article of clothing had to be dyed really well it was sent to Pullars, a firm in Perth, Scotland. They were marvellous dyers and dry cleaners. In earlier years in Australia there was no firm with the excellent range of colours of Pullars, but it *was* possible to get things dyed. Today it is impossible to get anything dyed. You either do it yourself or throw it away and buy another.

The most dramatic change in women's fashions during Ruth's lifetime came in the 1920's with plunging necklines and shortening skirts. These gave rise to another little poem, or song, which Ruth remembers as having gone something like this:

Blouses much lower
Will be in the spring.

And dresses much shorter
 Will be quite the thing.
 If they meet in the middle...
 Well God save the king!

In 1930 or 1931, Ruth bought her first long evening dress in England, and they have never since quite gone out of fashion; long evening dresses have always been correct for formal occasions. At that time they came in for all evening wear and Ruth loved them. She had a good figure and knew she looked well in them.

Her first long evening dress, she recalls, had black flounces to her ankles and a huge soft green pattern of leaves. It was quite low at the top, particularly the back, which pleased Charles. He always said she had a good back and liked her to wear rather backless evening dresses.

One evening aboard ship, she was wearing this dress to dinner. While walking up a companionway she heard some peppery old Indian army type behind say: "Damned good job you girls have gone into long dresses at last; teach you to walk properly!"

When the Queen was in Tasmania, in 1954, Ruth observed that she went to a service at St David's Cathedral wearing the coat of a coat and skirt over a summer frock. This seemed extraordinary to the local people, but in England cardigans were not worn on occasions like that; they would have been much too informal. Ruth does not recall having seen cardigans until she came to Australia.

Nor did the Queen wear the collar of her blouse or dress outside her jacket. In those days, it simply wasn't done. Ruth is today sometimes torn between 'collar in' and 'collar out'; the one correct and the other non-U but prettier.

Ruth has always liked to be well dressed, and to this day insists upon being smart and bright in what she wears. Too often, when buying clothes, she finds herself faced with the attitude that only dull, sombre colours are suitable for the elderly. This she deplores, insisting that there is no good reason why elderly people should be compelled to look tired and old.

Shopping

Ruth remembers with nostalgia Hobart's shops when she returned to live in Tasmania in 1932. There was Brownells with its lovely wool counter, first on the left as one entered from Liverpool Street. And Johnston and Miller where for years, she would go and sit and discuss the size of sheets she wanted to fit her growing family. That can't be done any more. You find it for yourself on the shelves, take what they stock and put up with it!

Although the rules of courtesy and respect remained, the barrier that had once existed between customer and shop assistant by that time had gone. The people who served you were friends. It was the same at Becks, the grocer in Liverpool Street, and at the shop of another Mr Beck who sold shoes.

The latter, who had been an aviator in World War I, stocked excellent shoes and gave personal service to match. Years later he moved to Criterion Street and stocked run-of-the-mill lines, and said he did much better. The less affluent customers, he found, were more budget-minded and paid on the spot while the socialites paid when they felt like it.

Others to give that excellent, personal service were Smales, the men's outfitter in Collins Street, and Walches the booksellers at the corner of Liverpool and Elizabeth Streets where the National Bank now stands.

Ruth does not suggest that those kindly, dedicated people have completely ceased to exist. There are still places where shop owners, managers and assistants go out of their way to please and take a genuine interest in their customers' needs, but it does not seem to be so much the rule in business as it was before World War II.

The Impact of World War I

In terms of social impact, World War I was the most significant event in Ruth's experience. It marked the change from nineteenth century attitudes to those of the twentieth century: Britain shaken out of her smug insularity; women emancipated by war work; clothes changed to become suited to conditions; social inequalities reduced; trade unions gaining real power.

Stanley used to describe how strikes were dealt with before that power developed. The men either accepted the terms offered or were locked out while the owners took a 'well earned' holiday, as often as not, abroad.

Women were protected in the nineteenth century, but all too often their role was that of house-keeper cum brood mare. Men were smug; small boys trading on Mother's good nature! Their attitudes seemed to be deliberately expressed in their portly stomachs decorated with festooning watch chains and imposing watches.

The nineteenth century woman could have servants and leisure, if she had money. It was not the thing for women to work. It disgraced their husbands! So with leisure went idleness and social nonsense to kill the time. Twentieth century woman has fought for her freedom and with that freedom came work and responsibility outside the domestic scene.

Despite their valuable, indispensable, work during the war, and despite the struggle of the suffragettes since the beginning of the century, women in Britain got only limited voting powers in 1918 and did not get full voting powers until 1928. Women in Australia had been voting since federation, 1901.

Science and Technology

Ruth is fascinated by the rapid advances of medicine. When she had septic pneumonia in 1938 she was treated with sulphanilamide, a drug which had only just come into use. Without it she would probably have died. The introduction of sulphanilamide in combatting bacterial infections was a great step in medical science. It seems incredible that that was only fifty years ago, and to think of the great advances made since in the use antibiotics.

The technological changes during her lifetime have been awesome: from candles and gas to the all-electric home; from one-ton trucks to massive prime movers; steam shovels to huge bulldozers; steamships to supertankers; spindly little aircraft that were little more than string, wire and linen to the supersonic jet; a six or seven week journey to get from Australia to England reduced to a couple of days. Yet, in their time, those

aeroplanes, steam shovels, steamships and one-ton trucks were as marvellous as the machines of today.

Ruth is thrilled by the achievements in modern day space exploration, and remembers the excitement on Colebrookdale as they watched Sputnik cross the sky, and again at Fahan School when everybody went to the assembly hall to watch the moon landing on television.

She points out, however, that the aviating pioneers during the first part of the century gave people at large just as great a thrill, perhaps even greater. She watched an aerobatics display at Hendon in England, in 1929. That was an occasion of just as much excitement. This is something that young people of today, who think nothing of flying from one place to another, simply can't appreciate.

The apparent incredibility of it all hasn't appalled her. It has never hit her as something unbelievable. This is because her life has been busy, heavily involved in the moving world about her, adjusting and accepting the situation in which she has worked.

There is probably no area of technology in which Ruth has been more closely involved than the motor car. Hereagain the developments have been enormous. She recalls the discomfort of going on school outings in charabancs, the horse-drawn forerunners of the motor bus. The Napier she learned on in 1921 had a folding canvas hood and removable side curtains. The gear lever was inside the car, but on many others it was not. Spare tyres were carried strapped to the running board. There was no syncromesh, let alone automatic gears.

Ruth has had a variety of cars: the Chevrolet tourer given to her by her father in 1931; the A model Ford which Charles and she had at Nutshell; the Bedford utility; an old Whippet matchbox-style car purchased during the war; a Morris Ten army utility - convenient with a large family but not very comfortable - purchased at the end of the war; a nice little Morris Ten sedan; a Morris Oxford which was unreliable; a luxurious Humber Super Snipe purchased in 1951 when wool prices were high; a Humber Hawk, sound but uninspiring; a Peugeot 403 which she had up to the time of Charles's death. She has since had a Renault, a Datsun and the Camira which she now drives.

She is emphatic that of them all the Peugeot was the best. It's handling qualities, reliability, economy and comfort put it far ahead of the rest. The Snipe was something special, but an expensive car to run.

Culture

In culture Ruth's tastes are wide. She loves music, literature, the visual arts and earth sciences.

She was always fond of music. At Collegiate, under Mary Corvan's tuition, she played Beethoven's sonatas, Chopin and Liszt. By the age of sixteen she had made good progress, but unfortunately didn't continue with the study after leaving school, being too lazy, she confesses.

Her favourite composer was Beethoven and she was also keen Bach. Really modern music was something she didn't meet until she was in her early twenties, but it is something she has come to love. This was never out of a sense of rebellion, but a genuine reaction to the impact of much modern music.

Ruth likes most literature, but has a firm distaste for the literature and criticism of the 1920's. She finds herself in great sympathy with the twelfth century renaissance, which in literature, she came to learn at university, is greater than that of the sixteenth century because it suddenly brought to the West all the things that had belonged to the Eastern Mediterranean. The sixteenth century was more a time of reassessing the value these things, breaking the habit of commenting, recommending and commenting on comment.

She loves the Chanson de Roland and the works of Chaucer, in the earlier period. In the latter, she has a sustaining interest in Shakespeare and the sixteenth century French poets. She finds modern novels often heavy going, and agrees with a friend who once said of a particular novel that she didn't like it because the hero kept stopping every five minutes to take his soul out for repairs. She gets bored with that kind of thing.

In modern poetry she likes people like T. S. Elliot. She sometimes finds him difficult to understand but enjoys the pure music of his work. Gerard Manley-Hopkins she enjoys very much indeed.

Ruth's appreciation of the visual arts has developed greatly since taking up painting herself. Her tastes have widened and she has a far greater insight into what it is that other artists are doing. Each school of art, each era, each individual work, she tries to appreciate for what it is, not according to conventional notions about whether it should be representational, abstract, or comply with any other preconceived rule.

She does have her likes and dislikes, nevertheless. She was not a lover of Art Deco which was the vogue in the 1920's. She feels art had gone into a slump at that time. It reflected the new social freedom which came with World War I, a freedom gone to seed among those with more money than sense, yet a freedom that was vital to the community at large.

In Summary

To be old is something that cannot be avoided, but Ruth cannot let the world pass her by. Whenever she sees a baby in its pram, while shopping in a supermarket, she will always give it a bright smile. Ninety nine times out of a hundred she gets a lovely smile back.

She has never done anything really well in life, she feels. There have been too many things she has wanted to do: to ride well; to sew even though she was never very good with a needle; to garden; to study; to draw and paint. There simply hasn't been the time to do everything she has wanted to do and devote to each, or even a single one, the professionalism that goes with real achievement.

But she has no regrets about the way she has spent her life. She would have liked a career but, more strongly, she had wanted to be a wife and mother. It is the dichotomy of life for a woman; the need to give herself to her family, yet the need to express herself as something more than a domestic being.

On coping with herself, her own nature, Ruth makes the statement:

'Life's experiences, pleasant and unpleasant, cannot quite change the introvert nature; someone brought up as I was. But they can make them aware of their shortcomings, look at themselves objectively, lose all self-satisfaction. An uncomfortable situation but it may at least help to make life tolerable.'

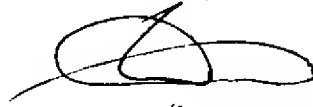
In summing up her life, she says:

'I feel that I have been lucky: to have travelled; to have studied languages and science and gained a degree; to have been happily married and had a large family; to have worked hard, physically and mentally; to have worked with

farm animals; to have been able to work in a wool shed; to have ridden horses and driven cars; to have learned about the workings of cars; to be able to indulge in a passion for the seaside; to have had a useful job, teaching; to have a small job even now, the Lapidary Club library; to have been able to paint; to have had access to the books of my choosing; to have had gardens; never to have known poverty or hunger; above all, to have had love and kindness all my life.

'What more could I want? Thanks be to the good Lord.'

*Finals read in full on
Aug 17th 1999*



MIKE HAND.

RUTH HAND

A biography

by

JOHN HAND

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informing His Grace that he was not used to getting such demands and he would not be welcome.

The Marquis of Ripon, by contrast had played his part well in society, and always entertained the archbishop. He had even entertained the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, at great expense. John Hodgson was too good a businessman to indulge in such extravagance. He would not put social life ahead of his duty as a landlord, and his money went into the upkeep of the buildings on his estate.

At the time of John Hodgson's death, in 1902, staff at Nocton Hall would have included: the butler; a housekeeper who supervised, never doing housework herself, and was the intermediary between staff and mistress; a cook; a kitchen maid who was cook's understudy; a scullery maid who did the washing up; a pantry maid; a footman; the boot boy who cleaned the boots and shoes of all members of the family and guests; first and second housemaids; a house-parlourmaid; a tweeny who helped sometimes in the kitchen and sometimes in the house; a coachman; a groom or two; a stableboy; a head gardener; under gardeners; a woodsman.

The Nocton estate, consisted of the home farm and about six tenant farms, all on very rich soil, particularly on the fens. It was intensive farming, high yielding in grain crops and fat stock. The fens were low, flat lands that had to be constantly drained. They had dykes running through them, with pumps going all the time to keep the water out. The earliest tractors could not be used on that land. It was tried but they simply sank into the ground.

Nocton Hall had its own 'halt', a little station with platform and all. Stanley could remember such things as a trainload of damaged raisins being brought there to feed the pheasants, and once a trainload of timber from a bankrupt concern being brought there for maintenance of farm buildings.

Farming methods when Stanley was there were traditional but effective. In the winter, cattle were put in shippons, or crew yards, which were buildings something like Dutch barns, but with removable sides, where they sheltered from snow and other rigours of the weather. By the end of the winter the cattle would be standing far closer to the roof than at the beginning. With the coming of spring and the release of the cattle onto the fields, the consolidated mass of straw and dung that had accumulated beneath them would be taken out and spread as manure.